Godhead is light. Nescience is darkness. Where there is Godhead there is no nescience.

BACK TO GODHEAD

The Magazine of the Hare Krishna Movement • July/August 2009 • $4.50

ISKCON ARAVADE

The opening of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gopāla Grāma

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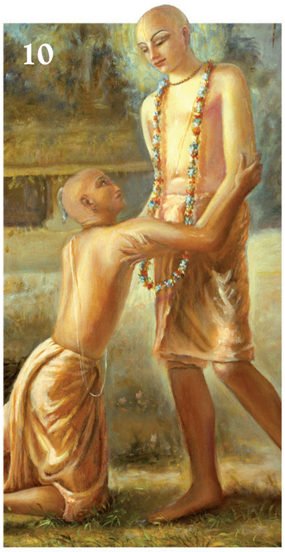

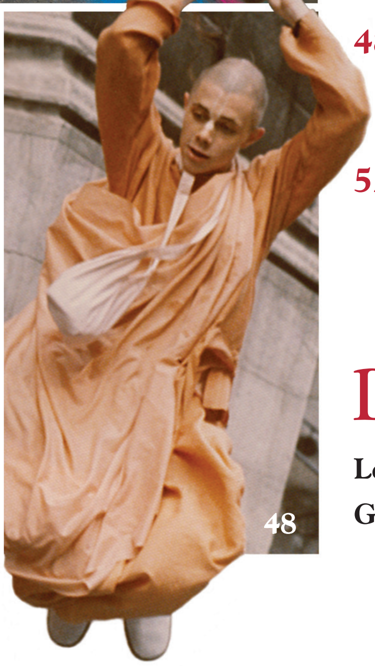

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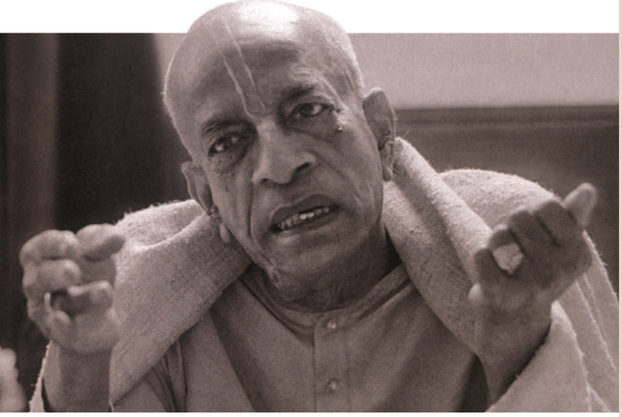
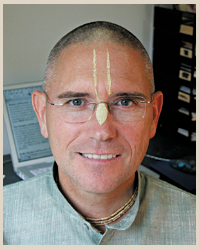
COVER Visitors flow into the new Hare Kṛṣṇa temple in the small town of Aravade, Maharashtra. Please see the article beginning on page 14. (Photo by Juraj Antoška; Inset photo by Govinda Dāsa.)



"We are not talking religion; we are talking of science. Don't bring in 'religion.' There are so many religions where people are doing things blindly. Such 'religion' is not our concern. We are talking of science."—p. 43

WELCOME



THIS ISSUE coincides with the annual festival of Janmāṣṭamī, celebrating the divine appearance of Lord Kṛṣṇa on earth more than fifty centuries ago. In "Śrī Kṛṣṇa Janmāṣṭamī: The Advent of the Deliverer," Karuṇā Dhārinī Devī Dāsī explains how Lord Kṛṣṇa's "birth" is unlike that of us ordinary living beings, who are born by the force of Kṛṣṇa's material energy.

In February, Lord Kṛṣṇa made another appearance, this time in His deity form in the new Hare Kṛṣṇa temple in Aravade. Tattvavit Dāsa writes about the significance of this new temple in a rural area of Maharashtra. Tens of thousands of villagers attended the opening ceremonies in an atmosphere saturated with the sound of the Lord's holy names.

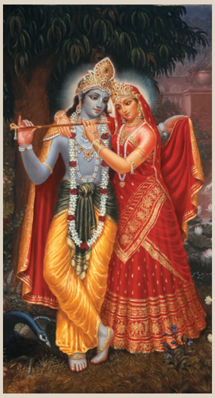
Chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa always plays a prominent role at temple openings, as it does during any Hare Kṛṣṇa function, because it forms the core of devotees' spiritual practice. In "Kīrtana-Yoga and the Mahā-mantra," Satyarāja Dāsa writes about the history, practice, and results of chanting the holy names.

The goal of chanting is awakening our natural love for Kṛṣṇa, and in "Exploring Love," Viśākhā Devī Dāsī tells why loving Kṛṣṇa is the solution to our struggles to love and to be loved.

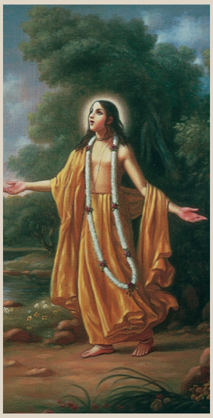
Hare Kṛṣṇa.—*Nāgarāja Dāsa, Editor*

OUR PURPOSES

- To help all people discern reality from illusion, spirit from matter, the eternal from the temporary.
- To expose the faults of materialism.
- To offer guidance in the Vedic techniques of spiritual life.
- To preserve and spread the Vedic culture.
- To celebrate the chanting of the holy names of God as taught by Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.
- To help every living being remember and serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead.



Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa are together the one Supreme Absolute Truth.



Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the combined incarnation of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, inaugurated the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa five hundred years ago.

His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, Founder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

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The Magazine of the Hare Krishna Movement

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Letters

God Comes to Us

It is clear from the jubilant faces of the onlookers in the article "Chanting at the World's Biggest Street Party" [March/April] that people are excited to see the Hare Kṛṣṇas. If people do not go to the temples, churches, and mosques, God will go to them. This is the essence of *saṅkīrtana.* Everyone can benefit by association with God simply by hearing His names while passing by or remembering them later on.

Thank you, Kṛṣṇa-kṛpā Dāsa, for helping to expand Lord Caitanya's movement by traveling to promote congregational public chanting.

Rūpacandra Dāsī
Bonners Ferry, Idaho

Destination of the Liberated Soul

I'd like to know more about what happens when someone thinks of Kṛṣṇa at the moment of death and therefore becomes eligible for promotion to the spiritual world. Where exactly does this soul go?

And I've read that such a person's past and future generations also get liberation. Is this a hard-and-fast rule that applies even to sinful ancestors and descendants?

Dhesan
Via the Internet

Our reply: When someone thinks of Kṛṣṇa at the time of death—a very difficult thing to do—then one attains Kṛṣṇa. According to the scriptures, first the soul is transferred to wherever Kṛṣṇa's pastimes are going on in the material world and is engaged in His service there. Then, after that final life in the material world, the soul is transferred to Kṛṣṇa's abode in the spiritual world.

When one becomes a pure devotee and gets liberated, it is said that generations before and after also get liberation. This statement is meant to emphasize the power of pure devotion to Kṛṣṇa. Śrīla Prabhupāda once said that it means that the ancestors and descendants will be given a chance to engage in devotional service, qualifying them for liberation. So even if someone is sinful, that person will still be given an opportunity to get liberated. It is up to him or her to make use of the chance.

Why No Meat or Alcohol?

Why do people eat only vegetables in spiritual life? And why is alcohol forbidden?

Choyan
Via the Internet

Our reply: Spiritual life should involve the least amount of violence in all one's activities. When one eats vegetables, most of the time one does not kill the plants. For example if you are taking tomatoes from a plant, the plant continues to give more tomatoes. Of course, eating vegetables can involve killing, but killing a plant is much less violent than killing a chicken or a goat or a cow.

As devotees of Kṛṣṇa, we are vegetarians primarily because we eat only what we first offer to Kṛṣṇa and in the *Bhagavad-gītā* He ask for vegetarian food.

Alcohol causes intoxication and loss of discrimination. Even under civil laws, one cannot drink and drive because of alcohol's detrimental effects. Alcohol makes us forget Kṛṣṇa and who we are—His eternal servants. We avoid it so that we can always remember the Lord.

How to Know if We're Good Enough

How does one know that one has become a pure devotee, uncontaminated by the material world and pure enough to return to the spiritual realm and achieve liberation from the cycle of rebirth? Does Kṛṣṇa say anything specifically about this in the *Bhagavad-gītā*? How do we ever know we have been "good" enough to achieve liberation?

Tara Nichols
Via the Internet

Our reply: We simply follow what Kṛṣṇa asks us to do in the *Gītā.* By doing that, we can experience that we are becoming free from selfish desires, and our consciousness expands. With expanded consciousness, we see one reality: all living beings are part of Kṛṣṇa.

Somewhat paradoxically, the more we advance in spiritual life, the more we see that we have not advanced. So how do we know that we have become good enough to achieve liberation? We never think we have become qualified. But Kṛṣṇa, out of His infinite mercy, sees our sincere endeavor and liberates us.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.34) Kṛṣṇa says, "Engage your mind always in thinking of Me, become My devotee, offer obeisances to Me, and worship Me. Being completely absorbed in Me, surely you will come to Me."

Kṛṣṇa repeats this promise almost verbatim in text 18.65: "Always think of Me, become My devotee, worship Me, and offer your homage unto Me. Thus you will come to Me without fail. I promise you this because you are My dear friend."

So there you have it. By engaging in *bhakti-yoga,* one will go back to Kṛṣṇa—definitely, no questions asked, and with a full guarantee. Kṛṣṇa makes this promise, and He says "without fail."

Striving for Consistency

How can I become consistent and overcome my attachment to worldly pleasures? I am always failing in my chanting and other devotional activities. I do not know how to overcome this. Please help.

Haridasan Muscat
Via the Internet

Our reply: Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that lust is the greatest enemy of the soul, for it binds one tightly to the material world. The first step to overcoming it is to recognize that we are failing. You have done that, and that is wonderful.

We then have to sincerely develop a desire to overcome our shortcomings. That means accepting the remedy, which is to associate with devotees more advanced than us and spend lots of time in their company engaging in devotional service. By doing that, we will be consistent with our chanting, and it will be easy to overcome lust and other worldly pleasures. So please pray to Kṛṣṇa to give you the association of devotees, and serve in their company.

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Back to Godhead, January/February 2009

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In May of 1970 Śrīla Prabhupāda gave a series of lectures on Śrī Īśopaniṣad, *one of the primary* Upaniṣads *and the only one he chose to write a commentary on.*

FOUNDER'S LECTURE
Los Angeles—May 15, 1970

Learn from the SELF-CONTROLLED

To be a qualified teacher of Vedic knowledge, one must have control over six urges of the body and mind.

by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

Founder-*Ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

anyad evāhur vidyayā / anyad āhur avidyayā
iti śuśruma dhīrāṇāṁ / ye nas tad vicacakṣire

"The wise have explained that one result is derived from the culture of knowledge and that a different result is obtained from the culture of nescience."
—*Śrī Īśopaniṣad,* Mantra 10

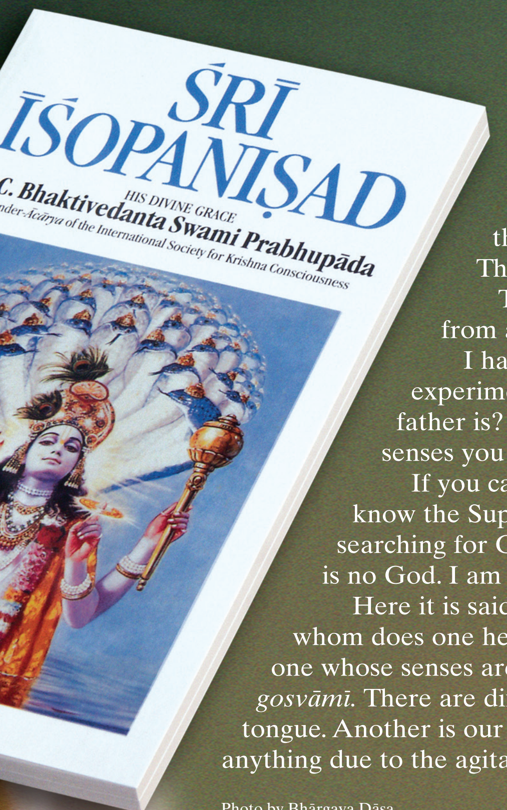
ŚRĪ
ĪŚOPANIṢAD
HIS DIVINE GRACE
C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda
nder-Ācārya of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness

Photo by Bhārgava Dāsa

THIS VERSE IS VERY IMPORTANT. *Śuśruma* means "it is heard." In the Vedic disciplic succession, it is never said, "It is experienced." Rather, one learns by hearing from authority. That is the secret of Vedic understanding.

People are now engaged in researching what is on the moon. That is the materialist way—to try to understand things by one's own experience. That is called *pratyakṣa,* direct, experimental knowledge.

The Vedic way of understanding is different. It is *śruti. Śruti* means to hear from an authoritative source. Knowledge gained in that way is real knowledge.

I have often given the example that if you want to know who your father is by experimental knowledge, will that be possible? No. So how can you know who your father is? By hearing from the authority, your mother. Similarly, with your imperfect senses you should not try to understand things beyond your experimental knowledge.

If you cannot know your material father by experimental knowledge, how can you know the Supreme Father—your original father—by experimental knowledge? People are searching for God. But after searching, searching, searching, they fail. They say, "Oh, there is no God. I am God." Their search is finished because they do not know how to find God.

Here it is said, *iti śuśruma:* "it is heard." That is how one receives Vedic knowledge. From whom does one hear? From the storekeeper? No. *Dhīrāṇāṁ:* from sober persons. *Dhīra* means one whose senses are not agitated by material influence. Such a person is also called a *svāmī* or *gosvāmī.* There are different kinds of agitation. The first agitating agent is the mind. Another is the tongue. Another is our speaking power. Another is anger. When we become angry, we forget. We do anything due to the agitation of anger. When we speak in anger, we speak so many nonsense things.

In *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta* (1), Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī list six kinds of agitation:

vāco vegaṁ manasaḥ krodha-vegaṁ
jihvā-vegam udaropastha-vegam
etān vegān yo viśaheta dhīraḥ
sarvām apī māṁ pṛthivīṁ sa śiṣyāt

“A sober person who can tolerate the urge to speak, the mind’s demands, the actions of anger, and the urges of the tongue, belly, and genitals is qualified to make disciples all over the world.”

> ***The teacher or spiritual master does not invent . . . . He gives the same old thing as heard from Vedic authority.***

The Food Allotted To Human Beings

Jihvā-vegam refers to the agitation of the tongue. To agitate the tongue there are so many advertisements. “Here is liquor.” “Here is chicken.” “Here is beef.” What for? To satisfy the urges of the tongue. Is it a fact that without beef, without chicken, without liquor, we cannot live? It is not a fact. For living, we have so many nice things that God, Kṛṣṇa, has given for human beings. You can take grains, fruits, milk.

The cow produces so much milk, not for itself but for human beings. That is our allotment from God: “Mrs. Cow, although you are producing milk, you cannot drink it. It is for human beings, better animals. What will you do by drinking milk?”

Of course, in infancy every animal lives on mother’s milk. That is nature’s arrangement. But cow’s milk is specifically meant for human beings. We can take what is ordained by Kṛṣṇa, or God. But we have the agitation of the tongue, so we think, “Why shall I be satisfied simply taking grains, milk, vegetables, and fruits? Let me maintain hundreds of slaughterhouses and kill these animals. Although by giving me milk they have become my mother, let them be killed because of the agitation of my tongue.” You see?

You haven’t got to hear from such nonsense persons, but you have to hear from the *dhīrāṇām,* those who have controlled their senses, the *gosvāmīs* or *svāmīs.* You must hear from one who has control over six kinds of agitating agents: control of the mind, control of the tongue, control of anger, control of speaking, control of the genitals, and control of the belly. One who has control over these six things is called *dhīra.*

The Example of Lord Śiva

There is a poem by the great poet Kālidāsa called *Kumāra-sambhava.* The poem describes how Pārvatī killed herself in the Dakṣa-yajña, or the sacrifice conducted by Dakṣa, her father. Because of the circumstances surrounding Pārvatī’s death, Lord Śiva, her husband, was very angry. He left to engage in meditation. Later, when there was a fight between the demons and the demigods, the demigods wanted a general. They concluded that only a son born of Lord Śiva would be able to lead them in the battle. Lord Śiva was meditating naked. The demigods sent Pārvatī, reincarnated, to worship the Śiva-liṅga just to agitate him for sex. But he was not agitated. He was silent.

Kālidāsa says this event shows that Śiva is the perfect example of *dhīra.* Śiva is naked, and a young girl is worshiping and touching his genitals, but he is not agitated.

Dhīra means there may be causes for agitation, but one does not become agitated. There may be very nice food, but still, my tongue shall not be agitated. There is a very nice girl or boy, but I shall not be agitated sexually. In this way, when you are able to control the six agitating elements, then you become *dhīra.* Not that Lord Śiva had no sexual potency but was *dhīra.* He had potency, but he was not agitated. That is the example. Similarly, Kṛṣṇa danced with so many girls, but there was no sexual arousal. That is called *dhīra.*

Here it is stated, *iti śuśruma dhīrāṇām.* You have to hear from such a person, a *dhīra.* Then your knowledge will be perfect. If you hear from *adhīrāṇām,* those who are not controlled, then it is useless knowledge. Here in the *Īśopaniṣad,* the Vedic method—hearing from self-controlled persons—is given: *iti śuśruma dhīrāṇāṁ ye nas tad vicacakṣire.*

The student approaches the spiritual master and says, “I have heard knowledge from the Vedic authority. Now kindly explain it to me.” The teacher or the spiritual master does not invent something. He gives the same old thing as heard from Vedic authority. In the *Bhagavad-gītā,* Kṛṣṇa is again explaining the old thing to Arjuna.

So we have nothing to research. Everything is there. We simply have to hear from a person who is *dhīra,* who is not agitated by the six agitating agents. That is the process of Vedic knowledge.

tad viddhi praṇipātena
paripraśnena sevayā
upadekṣyanti te jñānaṁ
jñāninas tattva-darśinaḥ

“Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realized souls can impart knowledge unto you because they have seen the truth.” [*Bhagavad-gītā* 4.34]

Always remember that we have to learn from one who is *dhīra,* who has control over these agitating agents.

Thank you.

Glossary

Ācārya—a spiritual master who teaches by example.

Balarāma—Lord Kṛṣṇa's first expansion, who acts in the role of Lord Kṛṣṇa's elder brother.

Battle of Kurukshetra—an epic battle for rule of the world, fought five thousand years ago.

Bhagavad-gītā—the sacred book in which Lord Kṛṣṇa gives the essence of knowledge to His friend and disciple Arjuna.

Bhakti—devotional service to the Supreme Lord.

Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura—the spiritual master of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda.

Bhakti-yoga—linking with the Supreme Lord through devotional service.

Caitanya Mahāprabhu—the incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa who appeared five hundred years ago to teach the chanting of the names of God as the religion for the present age.

Darśana—"viewing," audience with a deity or saintly person.

Dharma—(1) ordained duties or religious principles; (2) one's eternal, natural occupation (i.e., devotional service to the Lord).

Godhead—the Absolute Truth, the Supreme Reality, progressively realized first as the impersonal all-pervasive oneness, more fully as the Supersoul within the heart of every living being, and ultimately as the all-opulent Supreme Person.

Gurukula—a school where children learn the philosophy and practices of Kṛṣṇa consciousness along with regular academic subjects (literally "the place of the guru").

Hare Kṛṣṇa—the great mantra Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

ISKCON—the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Japa—individual chanting of names of God, usually while counting on beads.

Kali-yuga—in the endlessly repeated cycle of four cosmic ages, the present and worst age, the Age of Quarrel, of which 5,000 of 432,000 years have passed.

Karma—material action; its inevitable reaction; or the law by which such action and reaction are governed.

Kīrtana—congregational singing of names of God, usually accompanied by cymbals (*karatālas*) and drums (*mṛdaṅgas*).

Kṛṣṇa—the Supreme Personality of Godhead in His original transcendental form (see "Godhead").

Mahābhārata—the epic history of ancient India, a history in which the *Bhagavad-gītā* appears as the most important and well-known text.

Māyā—illusion; the energy of the Supreme Lord that deludes living entities into forgetting their spiritual nature and forgetting God.

Māyāvādī—one who regards the Abs ultimately impersonal.

Modes of nature—the three qualities (goo and ignorance) that hold sway over all action in the material world.

Nityānanda—the incarnation of Lord Balarāma who appeared with Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Prasādam—vegetarian food that has been prepared for the Lord and offered to Him with devotion (literally "mercy").

Purāṇas—Vedic histories.

Rādhārāṇī—Lord Kṛṣṇa's consort and pleasure potency.

Rathayātrā—"chariot festival": a festival in which the form of Kṛṣṇa is borne in procession on a large canopy-topped chariot or float, especially the festival originating in Puri, India, for Jagannātha (Lord Kṛṣṇa, "the Lord of the universe").

Sannyāsa—the renounced life of a man who relinquishes home to dedicate himself fully to the Supreme.

Śrī—an honorific meaning "opulent" (similarly: Śrīla, Śrīmad, Śrīmān, Śrīmatī).

Śrīla Prabhupāda—His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam—the most important of the eighteen *Purāṇas,* which tells of the nature and pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa and His devotees.

Supersoul—the form of the Lord who resides in every heart along with the individual soul.

Upaniṣads—the 108 essential philosophical treatises that appear within the *Vedas.*

Vaiṣṇava—a devotee of the Supreme Lord (from the word *Viṣṇu*).

Varṇāśrama—the Vedic social system. It organizes society into four occupational and four spiritual divisions (*varṇas* and *āśramas*). The members of the four *varṇas* are the *brāhmaṇas* (intellectuals and priests), the *kṣatriyas* (administrators and soldiers), the *vaiśyas* (farmers and businessmen), and the *śūdras* (laborers and artisans). The members of the four *āśramas* are the *brahmacārīs* (celibate students), *gṛhasthas* (married people), *vānaprasthas* (retired people), and *sannyāsīs* (renunciants).

Vedas—the hymns of knowledge revealed by the Lord Himself at the beginning of creation.

Vedic—pertaining to the culture in which the *Vedas* and related scriptures guide all aspects of human life.

Viṣṇu—any form of the Personality of Godhead (see "Godhead"); the forms the Lord manifests to create and sustain the material world.

Vṛndāvana—the transcendental abode of Lord Kṛṣṇa, mirrored on earth as the town in India where Kṛṣṇa appeared five thousand years ago.

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Cultivating An Empathetic Heart

Developing the quality of empathy has many benefits for aspiring devotees of the Lord.

by Arcana Siddhī Devī Dāsī

WHEN I WAS doing my clinical psychotherapy internship in graduate school, a supervisor stressed connecting with our clients through realized empathy. Most of his interns came from privileged backgrounds, and he felt we needed more than just a theoretical understanding of our clients' pain.

My first session in "experiential empathy" was with Doris, who suffered from schizophrenia. A slight woman in her early 30s, she had an attractive face, but it was worn from exposure, as she would often choose to be homeless rather than stay in shelters. She would often sit in the waiting room carrying on conversations with imaginary persons who seemed real to her.

Doris wasn't a strong candidate for therapy, yet her case manager and I would provide her support. Once in a while she would have some respite from her illness and would talk about her numerous losses, including relationships, and her dream of being a teacher.

After my initial sessions with Doris, my supervisor had me spend an afternoon in a session designed to develop empathy for schizophrenics. Through earphones, a myriad of voices began to assault me—calling me names and demeaning my character. While listening to these voices, I was given a list of simple tasks to perform, such as going to the corner store to buy batteries. After two hours of listening to the taped voices and running my prescribed errands, I was spent. Physically and mentally exhausted, I joined with others to share our experiences. The training was effective in achieving its goal. I learned more about people plagued by this most debilitating illness and felt increased compassion for them.

My next client was a middle-aged man with multiple sclerosis. Wheelchair bound, he showed symptoms of

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, shown here helping one of His devotees to his feet, appeared in this world out of His infinite compassion for everyone suffering in material existence.

Painting by Prema Vilāsa Dāsa

depression, and his doctor referred him for mental health counseling.

By now I was familiar with my supervisor's relentless conviction for experiential empathy, so I wasn't surprised when I saw a wheelchair waiting for me in his office. For the next hour, he had me running small errands throughout the hospital while awkwardly learning to maneuver the wheelchair.

Reflecting on that internship, I appreciate how my supervisor approached this most important element of therapy—joining through empathy. Empathy helps us care about people by identifying with their suffering. It also helps us avoid falling into the trap of thinking we're superior to others. And it helps us develop humility—the gateway to making spiritual progress and developing a loving relationship with God.

We tend to see others as we are. Often the very thing we find reprehensible in another is a negative quality lurking within ourselves.

Kṛṣṇa's Help

Kṛṣṇa helps His fledgling devotees by purifying any mentality that prevents them from coming closer to Him. When we form opinions of people and their situations, we should do so with the desire to be of assistance and to please our guru and Kṛṣṇa. That kind of thinking will help us advance in spiritual consciousness. But if we evaluate others with a mentality of exploiting them or putting them down—to elevate our own sense of importance—that kind of judgment will hinder our spiritual progress.

One of the most unwanted qualities in the heart of a practitioner of *bhakti-yoga* is the tendency to judge others without concern for their spiritual welfare. This leads to faultfinding and puts us at risk of *vaiṣṇava aparādha,* or offending Kṛṣṇa's devotees. If we are fortunate, Kṛṣṇa will correct this tendency in our heart. Sometimes Kṛṣṇa, the originator of experiential empathy training, will place us in a situation similar to that of the person we are judging. Although this can be disconcerting, it is the Lord's kindness to help uproot the qualities in our heart that are obstacles to loving the Lord and His devotees.

When I was a young devotee, I was strict about attending all the temple programs. But I found myself critical of devotees who didn't always attend. One devotee suffered from an illness and did her best to come when she could. But I felt she could do better. Not long after those thoughts contaminated my consciousness, however, I became ill and often missed *maṅgala-ārati,* the early-morning worship.

Kṛṣṇa accomplishes many things by one action, and one result of my illness was a diminishing of my critical mentality. Kṛṣṇa has often placed me in situations similar to those of people for whom I lacked empathy, helping me develop more understanding of others' difficulties.

The saying *ātmavan manyate jagat* means that we tend to see others as we are. Often the very thing we find reprehensible in another is a negative quality lurking within ourselves. So it is prudent to reflect on this when we form opinions of others and to look within our heart to expose our own faults.

Prabhupāda's Example

By his example, Prabhupāda taught us to be lenient with others and strict with ourselves. He was uncompromising in his service to Kṛṣṇa and his daily spiritual practices. Yet he showed understanding and compassion toward his neophyte disciples, who often struggled to follow the basic practices of *bhakti-yoga.* As his disciples matured, he would sometimes sternly correct them, but only out of duty, to help them progress in their spiritual lives.

In the early days of the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, Prabhupāda asked one of his first disciples, Śyāmasundara Dāsa, an expert craftsman, to carve a deity of Lord Jagannātha from wood. At one point Prabhupāda came to see how the work was progressing. When he entered the room, he saw a pack of cigarettes sitting on Lord Jagannātha's head.

"It's all right," Prabhupāda told his embarrassed, contrite disciple.

Prabhupāda didn't need to become addicted to cigarettes to understand his disciple's plight. He instructed Śyāmasundara to reduce by one the number of cigarettes he smoked each day until the habit was gone. Prabhupāda was a pure devotee, his consciousness crystal clear. Because he had no contamination in his heart, he was free of the propensity to find fault or condemn.

In the *Bhagavad-gītā* (6.32) Lord Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna that spiritually advanced persons can understand both the happiness and the distress of others. Because of their own experience in the material world, they understand that people suffer because they forget the Lord and are happy when united with Him.

Saving the Coat

Like all spiritual qualities, empathy or compassion has a counterpart in the material realm. My supervisor was helping me develop empathy, but because he lacked knowledge of the eternal soul within the body, his conception of feeling another's pain was based on only the body's suffering. Prabhupāda tells the story of a man who jumps into a lake to save a drowning man and returns with only the man's coat. Born of the material mind, this kind of empathy will have only temporary value unless employed in our spiritual lives.

Śrīla Prabhupāda deeply felt the pain and suffering of the souls in this world. Once, in Māyāpur, he saw a scene from his balcony that brought tears to his eyes. Children were fighting off dogs to get food left on discarded plates. Prabhupāda then said that no one within ten miles of the ISKCON Māyāpur temple should go hungry; they should be fed with spiritually uplifting *prasādam.* Prabhupāda's compassion meant elevating people's consciousness so that they could eventually be freed from all suffering.

Empathy is a natural quality of the soul. Following in Prabhupāda's footsteps, we should cultivate concern for the suffering of others while understanding the ultimate goal of life. That doesn't mean we have to use the means devised by my supervisor—enacting another's suffering condition. But we can do practical things to develop empathy.

First is to have a student's mind —an inquisitive mind that seeks to understand the lessons ever present in our environment. The Eleventh Canto of the *Bhāgavatam* gives the example of a *brāhmaṇa* who describes twenty-four entities whom he considered his gurus. For example, he says that he learned valuable lessons from a pigeon, a honeybee, and a prostitute. Being open to what we can learn from others will help us appreciate the struggles of others and feel a connection we might have missed.

Another technique that can help us understand another's world is reflective listening. Also known as empathic listening, it requires the listener to summarize both the speaker's words and the feelings behind them.

Another powerful mindset is to practice seeing people for their potential rather than for who they were in the past or who they are in the present. Everyone is a pure soul with an eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa. Remembering this can help us see beyond people's material conditioning, allowing us to care about them and want to help them.

Finally, we want to be in the mood of service to others. When we look for ways to serve rather than exploit, our hearts open and we naturally feel the connection that eternally exists between all living entities.

These are just a few suggestions for how we can move in the world in such a way that we expand the mentality favorable for developing empathy in our role as a spiritual practitioner.

Because of his spiritual perfection, Prabhupāda could always clearly diagnose our suffering and worked tirelessly and patiently to give us the remedy. Despite having once said that our hearts were as hard to clean as coal, he didn't give up on us. Now that Śrīla Prabhupāda is no longer physically present on the planet, we have to extend his compassionate, empathetic nature to all the living entities who have the opportunity to take shelter in Lord Caitanya's movement.

When the guru leaves the world, the disciples have to rise to the occasion and take up the legacy of their beloved teacher. The guru will empower sincere disciples to carry on the mission. Sincere disciples of a Vaiṣṇava guru are themselves Vaiṣṇavas, deserving of the prayer offered in ISKCON temples each morning: "I offer my respectful obeisances unto all the Vaiṣṇava devotees of the Lord. They can fulfill the desires of everyone, just like desire trees, and they are full of compassion for the fallen souls." ❁

Arcana Siddhī Devī Dāsī was initiated by Prabhupāda in 1976. She lives with her husband and son in Sandy Ridge, North Carolina, where she works as a family therapist.

What Is the Hare Kṛṣṇa Movement?

Founded in 1966 by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) carries on a great ancient tradition rooted in the *Bhagavad-gītā,* the teachings Lord Kṛṣṇa spoke five millennia ago. The *Gītā* and the other Vedic scriptures declare Kṛṣṇa to be the original person, God Himself, who appears periodically in this world to liberate all living beings.

Only five hundred years ago, Kṛṣṇa descended as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to teach the most sublime and effective means of meditation for the present day: the chanting of the names of God, especially as found in the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra.

Today members of ISKCON continue Lord Caitanya's movement by distributing the teachings of Lord Kṛṣṇa and the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra all over the world.

Pronunciation

We spell Sanskrit words and names by a phonetic system that lets you know how to say each word. Pronounce short **a** like the **u** in b**u**t, long **ā** like the **a** in f**a**r (and held twice as long as the short **a**). Pronounce **e** like the **a** in ev**a**de, long **ī** like the **i** in p**i**que. Pronounce the vowel **ṛ** like the **ri** in **ri**m, and **c** like the **ch** in **ch**air. Pronounce consonants like **ch, jh,** and **dh** as in staun**ch-h**eart, hed**ge-h**og, and re**d-h**ot. Pronounce **ś** and **ṣ** like **sh.** So for *Kṛṣṇa* say KRISHNA, for *Caitanya* say CHAITANYA.

Spiritual Names

ISKCON members receive names of Lord Kṛṣṇa or his great devotees, combined with Dāsa, for men, or Dāsī, for women, both of which mean "servant." For instance, the name Kṛṣṇa Dāsa means "servant of Kṛṣṇa."

ISKCON Aravade

A New Temple for a Rural District

Villagers are invited to serve Kṛṣṇa while staying in the lap of nature.

by Tattvavit Dāsa

Photos by Padmamālī Dāsa, Govinda Dāsa, Ananta Śeṣa Dāsa, and Juraj Antoška

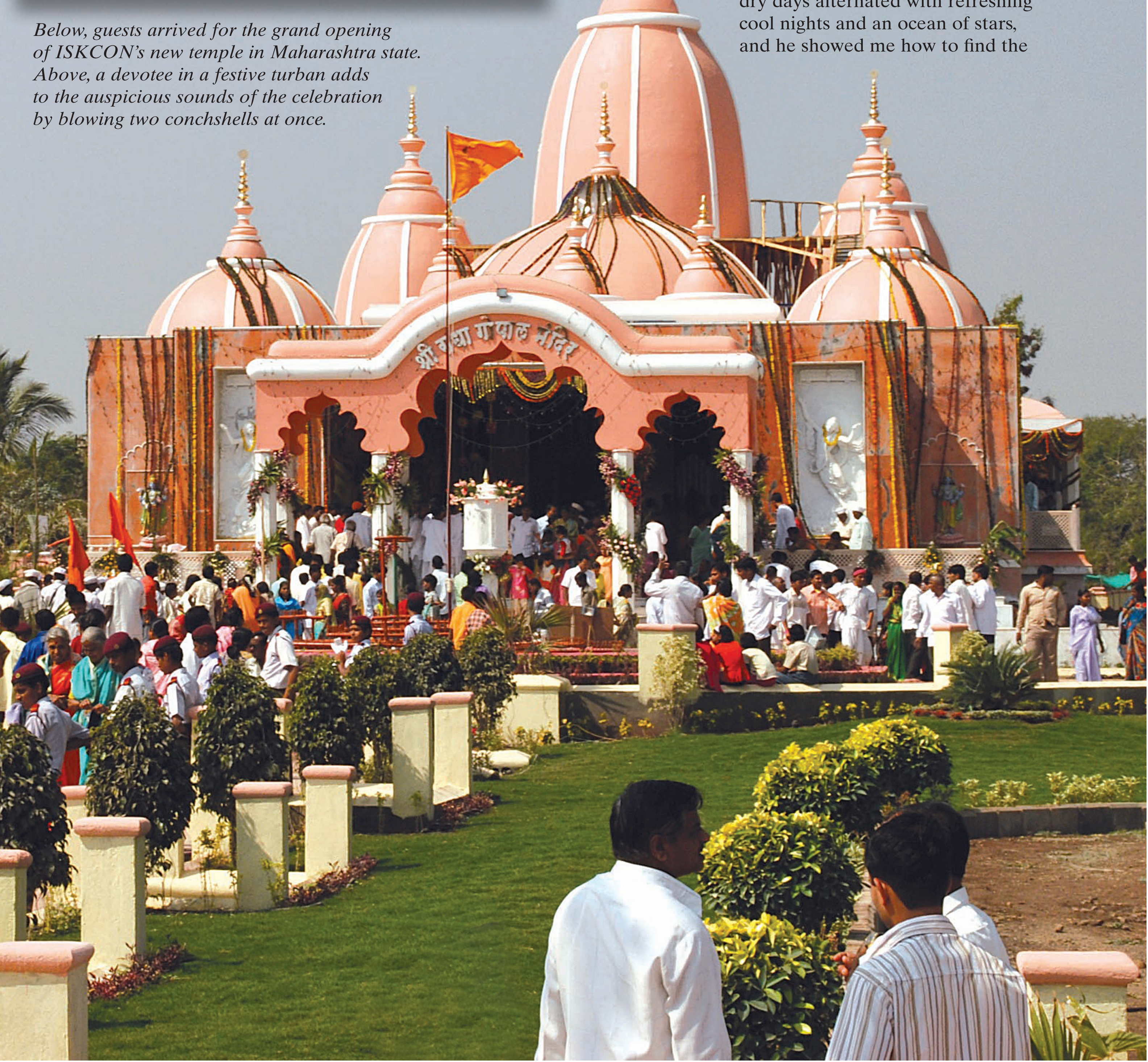
IN FEBRUARY, a temple opened in Aravade, Maharashtra, the hometown of Lokanāth Swami, an ISKCON leader. Maharashtra's capital is Mumbai, and the state's chief minister wished to be at the opening, but his boss, Sonia Gandhi, called Congress Party leaders together for a meeting in New Delhi that weekend. State legislators and ministers, though, dropped in with entourages during the ceremonies to express appreciation before large crowds. The four thousand citizens of Aravade (*aa-ra-vah-day*) invited many relatives from other towns, and almost seven thousand Hare Kṛṣṇa devotees came from cities in India and abroad. The town's population nearly tripled for the event.

The temple was built on Aravade's northeastern perimeter, near the low hills, wide wells, and fields where Lokanāth Swami was born and herded animals as a boy. I began noticing the domesticated animals while traveling on a road out to Aravade from the Sangli train station. Bullock teams walked to the Sangli sugar factory with cartloads of harvested sugar cane.

वृंदावन गार्डन
VRINDAVAN GARDEN

Mighty bullocks often pranced by the house I stayed in, too, their heads and horns bobbing as they pulled one or two passengers around a curve in a bullock cart. It is also common to see people walking a few goats on tethers to keep them from straying. To a Westerner it looks unusual, but around Aravade it is as common as Westerners' walking dogs on leashes.

I arrived two weeks early, partly to see the preparations and partly because I had just edited Lokanāth Swami's book *A Comprehensive Guide to Sanskrit Pronunciation* and he wanted to discuss it. Hot, dry days alternated with refreshing cool nights and an ocean of stars, and he showed me how to find the



Below, guests arrived for the grand opening of ISKCON's new temple in Maharashtra state. Above, a devotee in a festive turban adds to the auspicious sounds of the celebration by blowing two conchshells at once.

North Star in relation to the Big Dipper.

Traveling worldwide as a Vaiṣṇava renunciant, Lokanāth Swami advocates plain living and high thinking. "God made the country and man made the mess" is the theme of another book he is working on. A rough cut of a documentary he is featured in (*The Lost Village*) premiered at the temple opening. Set in rural Aravade, it is about losing the connections between family, community, cows, and nature by joining the urban rat race.

In the early seventies, Lokanāth Swami attended college in Bombay but left to join the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON). His family members objected and came up with a proposal: He could live as a devotee, but in Aravade. They promised to build him a small temple, but he rejected the idea. He wanted to live with the foreign devotees in Bombay. Aravade never got that small temple, but it didn't lose out.

The Greatest Benefits

Now his family, village, and region have a two-acre temple complex, and his sister and three brothers chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. The project's main objective is to demonstrate principles of plain living and show how village life is favorable for spiritual advancement. A natural Kṛṣṇa conscious life will protect villagers from degradation, especially the youth. Students from several hundred schools and colleges and people from more than a hundred villages will be visiting. Near the temple they can even see the restored two-room house where Lokanāth Swami was born and a few old things are now preserved. Everything else is new: the cows' stable; a pink-and-white multi-towered temple that holds five hundred; a large park with a fountain, lawn, and flowers; and a twelve-room hall exhibiting sacred places and personalities. Aravade has gained a lot.

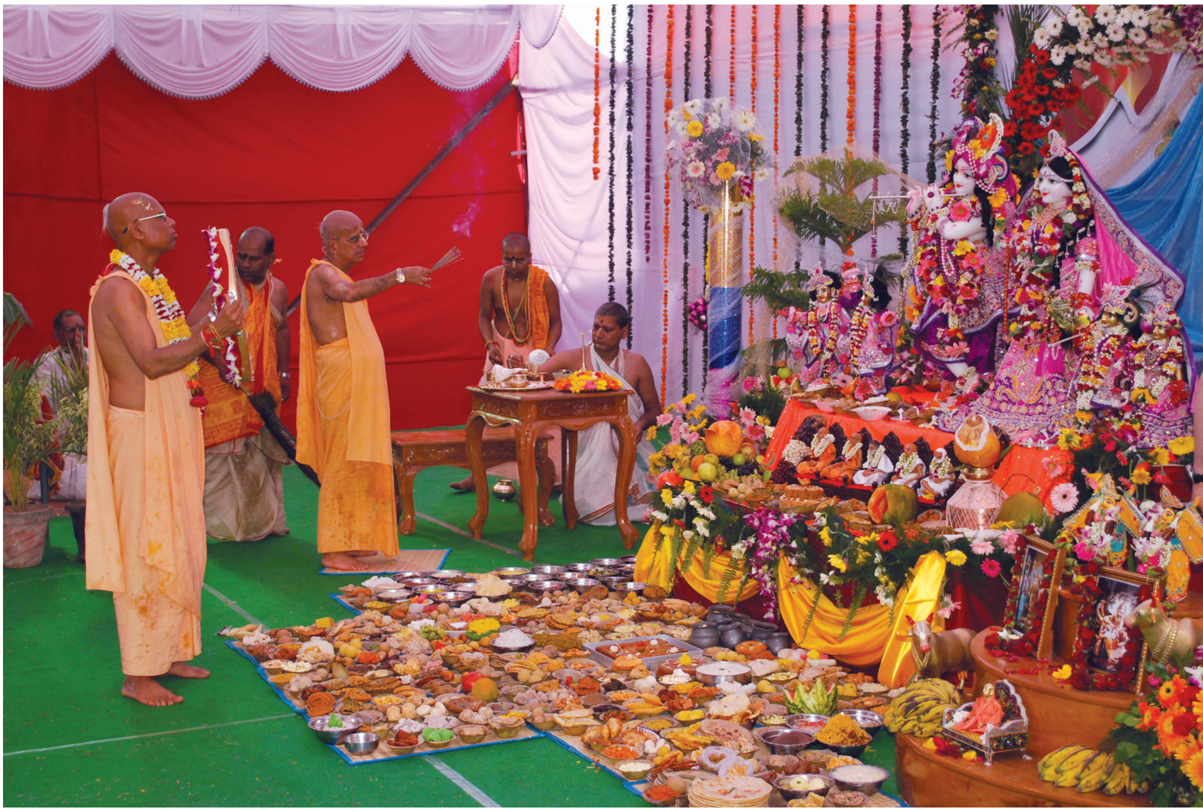
Each visitor will be brought into communion with Kṛṣṇa, the

A temple cow is honored with a traditional worship ceremony (above). At top, ISKCON leaders (from left) Bhaktivikāśa Swami, Bhakti Caitanya Swami, Hari Śauri Dāsa, and Lokanāth Swami offer a coconut lamp. At right, Lokanāth Swami and dignitaries offer coconut lamps during the ribbon cutting. At left, receptionists use plastic bracelets to help manage the large crowds.

Supreme Personality of Godhead. Most people do not know how to use all their energies in His service and think that ordinary activities will make them happy. To show people how to engage in Kṛṣṇa's service, Śrīla Prabhupāda opened ISKCON temples and asked his disciples to do the same. To inspire them, he quoted a song by Śrīla Narottama Dāsa Ṭhākura, a great devotee who advised that desire be utilized in serving Kṛṣṇa: *kāma kṛṣṇa-karmārpaṇe.* "I will transform my desire to enjoy something," sang Narottama, "by serving Kṛṣṇa instead."

Śrīla Prabhupāda said during a class in Vṛndāvana in 1976, "We have constructed this temple with the enthusiasm that there must be a very nice temple for Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma. Somebody else is willing that 'I must have a very big sky-

Because of the size of the crowds (left), most of the ceremonies take place under spacious tents. Below, the deities receive the first ārati *after Their installation. At bottom and bottom left, the kitchen and food preparation areas show what's involved in feeding thousands of guests.*



scraper.' People may ask, 'What is the difference between these two desires?'"

He explained that some people want to own a big house for their sense gratification, while others desire to possess or support an expensive temple because they are devoted to the Personality of Godhead. To elevate and refine human life and realize the universal and inexhaustible source of values such as goodness, truth, and beauty, we must endeavor morally, intellectually, and aesthetically. We cannot be without desire or suppress our desires by force. Some gurus propose ridding ourselves of desire because our desires entangle us in the bondage of never-ending karma. But full freedom from desire is impossible, because desire is part of our nature as persons. Rather than try to suppress desire, we must redirect it, just as we must redirect our senses rather than try to stop them.

"Yes, I have got my eyes," Śrīla Prabhupāda continued, "and I want to see Kṛṣṇa. That is wanted. Even in meditation. Real meditation means seeing within, concentrating the mind on seeing the form of the Lord in our heart. So desire has to be purified. The same desire should be utilized for Kṛṣṇa's service."

Temples help people purify their desires. Indians go to temples at convenient times during the day to see Kṛṣṇa, and especially in ISKCON temples Kṛṣṇa is well dressed and worshiped at a high standard. With this beautiful image of Kṛṣṇa in mind, people go about their daily activities conscious of their identity as His eternal servants. The spirit soul is different from the body and the mind, and spiritual happiness and contentment arise from being united with Kṛṣṇa's heart. This makes one's material desires fade away. When one is spiritually advanced, selfish desires no longer exist.

"One who has tasted the beauty of the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa," writes Śrīla Prabhupāda, "no longer has a taste for dead, material things."

The *Bhagavad-gītā* teaches

Guests crowd into the new temple (above) to await the appearance of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gopāla on the altar (above right). Right: Dharmarāja Dāsa, co-president of ISKCON Aravade.

Dignitaries get their first look inside the new temple (left), whose floor radiates with a stunning inlaid marble peacock. Above, a devotee explains one of the paintings that grace the walls of the twelve-room exhibition hall.

humanity to cease sense gratification by experiencing a higher taste, by chanting Kṛṣṇa's holy names, and by eating delicious food that was offered to Him.

Everyone is subjected to the attraction of sense objects, but if we devote ourselves to the service of the Lord, the face of our desires, pride, and so on, will change. Egocentric longing will become a purified, theocentric desire for Kṛṣṇa's satisfaction. Then it becomes possible to get out of this puzzle of material existence. Thus devotees offer Kṛṣṇa at least water and a flower, if not eatables, temple worship, and ultimately their very lives.

Before the Opening

For fifteen years ISKCON has had an ashram in Aravade. Across a relatively peaceful country road from it is the new temple. Before the opening, dozens of volunteers

व्यापारी संकुल
आर. के. इलेक्ट्रीकल्स
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Fireworks (above) celebrate the temple opening. At right, visiting devotee and trumpet player Ekalavya Dāsa twirls in kīrtana. *At left, artists use dyed flour to decorate a street for a procession through town.*

stayed busy planning and organizing. The hired workers readied everything from hand-carved wooden altars to an inlaid-marble peacock that is the fifteen-foot-wide centerpiece of the temple floor; from huge tent accommodations in fields to a government-financed thousand-foot-long widened road, now named Bhaktivedanta Swami Marg.

Despite the successful outcome, finding skilled labor had been problematic, since workers leave villages to earn city salaries. The new temple, by making Aravade a better place to live, should help it retain some youthful talent. Bright members of the next generation may want a village life with a strong spiritual center.

Beside a playground is a grassy and rocky replica of Govardhana Hill, which Kṛṣṇa lifted like an umbrella to save Vṛndāvana's villagers from a week's worth of torrential rain. The Supreme Lord knows how to float planets in space, so His lifting Govardhana was child's play, and it has made Kṛṣṇa famous for thousands of years.

When I visited the hill—twelve feet high and fifty feet long—workers were building a footpath around it, composed of 108 pairs of rough reddish rectangular stones, each about the size of an unabridged English dictionary.

The state electricity board, urged by the local government, supplied ISKCON a transformer and a direct line to the regional powerhouse, separate from Aravade's line. A brief ceremony, a *pūjā*, took place to dedicate this electricity to the devotional service of Kṛṣṇa. During the next few nights, just before the opening, carpenters and marble polishers ran their machines past midnight, bringing nearly to completion

the construction work that had started three years earlier.

Finally, after workers spent a day cleaning the site, ISKCON's guards donned crisp uniforms and the visiting donors and devotees arrived. The grounds quickly filled with individual and congregational chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, a request to Kṛṣṇa and Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī for engagement in Their loving devotional service.

The Opening Ceremonies

The temple project is named Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gopāla Grāma (*grāma* means "village"), and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gopāla captured the devotees' hearts at the opening. (*Gopāla* refers to Kṛṣṇa as the protector of cows.)

"Lokanāth Swami has shared his devotion for Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gopāla by inviting all of us," Rādhānātha Swami, an ISKCON leader, said to an enthusiastic crowd before leading the congregational chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra. "Their holy names are the sweetest of the sweet, sweeter than the sugar cane growing in the fields."

For years, the Aravade devotees have served small deities named Rādhā-Gopāla. At the opening, larger deities with the same names were installed in the new temple. The young men attending Them on the bigger and better altar noticeably took special pride in Rādhā-Gopāla and the new *mandira.* Also installed, at a second ceremony, were small deities of Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Nityānanda Prabhu and medium-size deities of Śrī Śrī Rukmiṇī-Viṭṭhala and Sītā-Rāma-Lakṣmaṇa-Hanumān.

Lokanāth Swami and Gopāla Kṛṣṇa Goswami admire a bas-relief of Lord Caitanya and His chanting party (bottom left). Top left: a Manipuri drum dance. Above: a lively kīrtana *on the tent stage. At far right, an actor portrays the Maharashtrian saint Tūkārāma. At right, women in colorful saris add to the joy of the* kīrtana *with their graceful dancing.*

Almost overnight, the temple was transformed from a messy

PADA

construction site into a treasure house of artistry, lit by a French chandelier. Geometric patterns of inlaid marble lend various colors to the white marble floor. The sculptor Milan Bag, who decades ago made clay bas-reliefs for ISKCON in Māyāpur, West Bengal, created in Aravade two long murals for the temple's entry porch and brightly painted bas-reliefs for the veranda walls and the walls beside the altar. His team also made a pair of colorfully decorated cows that sit flanking the marble steps, and two statues of Vṛndā Devī that stand at the opposite entrances to the veranda and can hold a Tulasī plant on their heads.

Visitors can admire the temple from a distance, both because it is set on a rise and because its towers catch everyone's vision. The architects were Vinay Khandekar and his wife, Anita, from Pune. Drawing closer, the visitors at the opening noticed gorgeous thick streamers of flowers and leaves—wrapped around columns, framing doors, and hanging within a dome, from its skylight down to points on its octagonal base. A Mumbai company arranged this abundance of flower power. As florists like to say, "Nothing says 'I love you' like flowers." These flowers were an offering of love to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

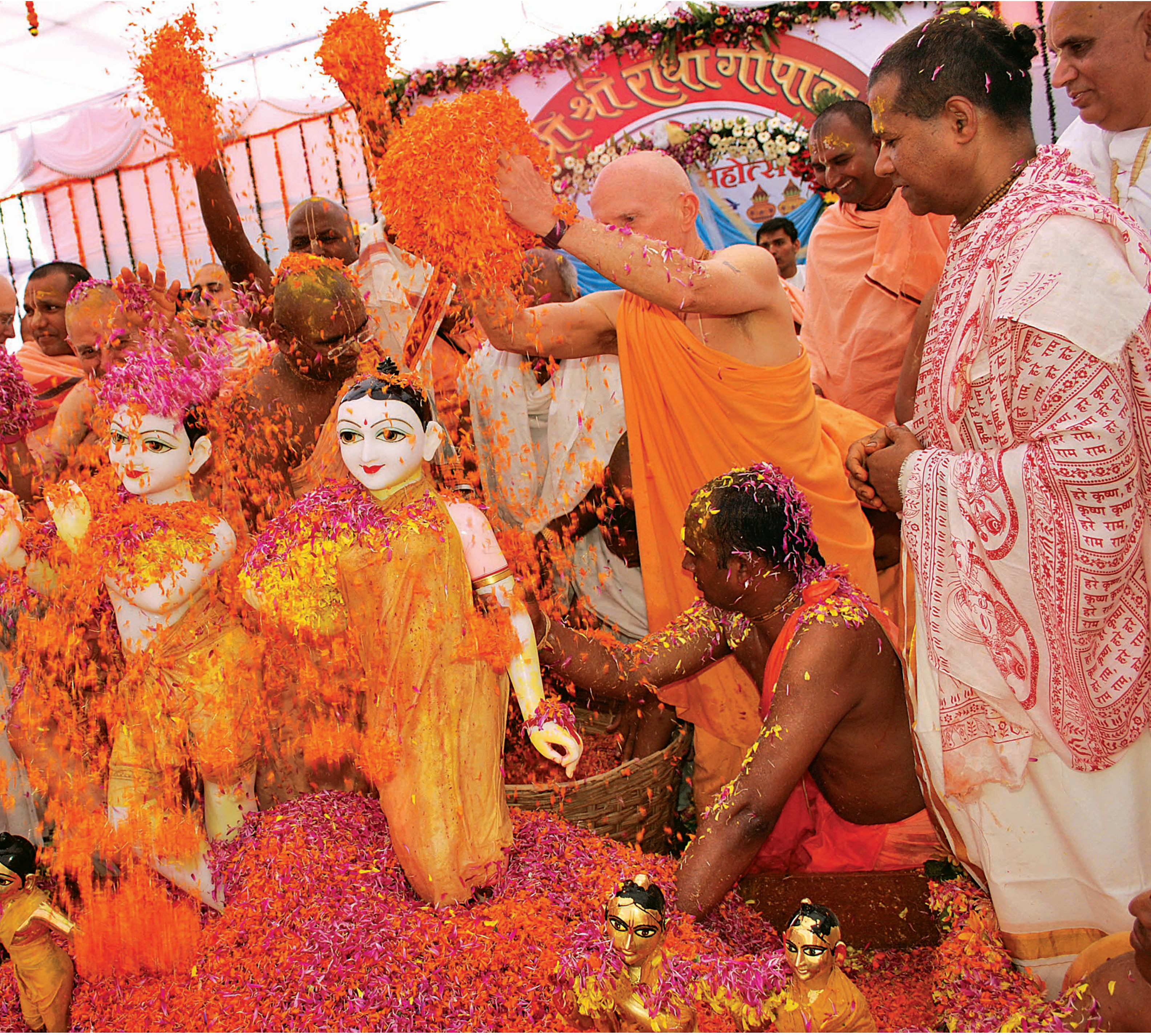
To inaugurate the three-day festival, devotees raised a flag depicting the eagle Garuḍa, Lord Kṛṣṇa's carrier, and also installed his image. Then the initial phase of the installation took place onstage. On the first evening, devotees unveiled the new marble street signs identifying Bhaktivedanta Swami Marg and went on a chanting procession led by an elephant.

PRABHUPADA

All stage events, including two dances and two long musical dramas, were viewable from anywhere in the huge tent and even outside it, thanks to a live video setup. A swing festival entertained devotees who got to pull the rope to swing Rādhā-Gopāla. Near the end, gift-giving and a vote of thanks honored the thirty ISKCON VIPs who attended.

The deity installations filled much of the schedule and culminated in a few devotees climbing to the top of the temple's highest

(*please turn to page 56*)



The elaborate installation ceremony includes a steady shower of flower petals (above). Left: one of many fire sacrifices conducted during the festival. On the opposite page, a family of devotees bathes deities of Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda with milk.

In your own

How has Kṛṣṇa Consciousness made you a bet

I used to hiss, and tut, and pull faces at people

who got in my way in the street, at the bus stop, and especially when getting on and off the train. I'd scowl and make rude remarks, and I was always in a hurry, even when I wasn't. I gave a new meaning to the word *impatient,* and it was always someone else's fault.

Seven months ago, I walked into Kṛṣṇa's temple, and my life changed forever.

Now I see my faults as things to be corrected so I can be a better devotee of Kṛṣṇa. I want my every word and thought and action to be pleasing to Kṛṣṇa, and although I slip up daily, I can at least say I'm trying to correct my faults.

I want to be a nice devotee, in and out of the temple. So I try to curb my tongue—and my face! I try to be humble and to remember that Kṛṣṇa sits in the heart of all living things and that I should be as respectful to strangers on the street as I would be to Kṛṣṇa or His devotees. Before, my life had no direction, no real purpose, and there was no reason to correct my faults or mistakes. Now everything I do is for Kṛṣṇa, and with His mercy I am on the path to becoming a better devotee and a nicer human being.

Kimimela Channah
Maidenhead, England

Kṛṣṇa consciousness makes me a better person mainly because

I follow the four principles of no meat-eating, no gambling, no illicit sex, and no intoxication. This in itself makes me a friend of Mother Nature.

Chanting sixteen rounds on my beads helps me overcome the influence of the mode of ignorance, which causes anger and egotism. Every day when I participate in *maṅgala-ārati* and the noon and evening *āratis,* my soul becomes more and more purified by the mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead Kṛṣṇa. Now I realize that Kṛṣṇa is everywhere, so I love every soul.

Rampapu Prabhu
Skudai, Malaysia

My everyday life is better through chanting the holy names

and focusing on listening. In the beginning I chanted one *mālā* (round) daily. Whenever I was confronted with a problem, I would put it before Kṛṣṇa and ask Him to give me strength to solve it. Then gradually my chanting gave me that strength. Eventually, I got inspired to increase my chanting to eight rounds daily. Then I progressed to sixteen rounds.

Now, whenever I face any problem, I don't think about it. I have learned that there is no need to lament before Kṛṣṇa and waste time. Instead, get to chanting, and follow the regulative principles. Now, I always feel the presence and assurance of Kṛṣṇa near me.

Lalita Rao
Pantnagar, Uttaranchal, India

Kṛṣṇa consciousness has totally changed my life.

Although our main aim is to attain pure love for Kṛṣṇa, still there are many side benefits of a Kṛṣṇa conscious life.

As a student, I used to be jealous of my classmates, but after coming to Kṛṣṇa consciousness I have a friendly feeling toward everyone. It has also changed my outlook on

Detail from a painting by Dhṛti Devī Dāsī

Kṛṣṇa is everything to me. Kṛṣṇa consciousness has made me more than a better person—I have understood that the real purpose of life is to just serve Kṛṣṇa. —*Anagha Desai, Mumbai, India*

words . . .

Pentip photo: Andrea Leone | Agency: Dreamstime.com

ter person in your everyday life?

the world. I like to cook *prasādam* for my classmates, distribute Prabhupāda's books among them, and help them in their studies.

Kṛṣṇa consciousness has taught me to be disciplined. Now I don't like to waste any natural resource, as everything belongs to Kṛṣṇa. And to give others Kṛṣṇa consciousness I have improved my confidence and my communication skills. Thus Kṛṣṇa consciousness has made me a better human being.

Kanupriya Agarwal
Delhi, India

Because of Kṛṣṇa consciousness I have been a committed vegetarian since 1992.

I follow the four regulative principles, read Prabhupāda's books, and offer devotional service at my local temple. Just doing these activities has changed my life forever. My greatest joy comes from having turned my mom and my dad into vegetarians.

When I think of how my life would be without Kṛṣṇa, it scares me into loving Him more. Without Kṛṣṇa I would be eating meat, madly chasing girls, drinking, and listening to nonsense music. I would not have a profound relationship with my own soul and Supersoul. I feel so good all the time knowing who God is and what God likes. It feels wonderful to please God, day after day.

Kṛṣṇa Dāsa
Laguna Beach, California

I was a nonvegetarian, and by Kṛṣṇa's mercy

I am now a pure vegetarian. I was very short-tempered, and I now try to control my anger. I have a mental satisfaction about everything, as I know that whatever is going to happen will be by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa and I cannot change it. All I can do is surrender myself to His divine wish and experience a beautiful result. I have seen myself transforming, evolving—all thanks to Him.

Kavita Chugh
Delhi, India

I loved "stuff," or things.

Before I walked into a Kṛṣṇa temple in August 2008, I would have happily spent my life on my endless search for stuff. But that to me seems a lifetime ago. Now, thanks to Kṛṣṇa's great and unending mercy, I can see my stuff for what it really is—an illusion, something temporary, and definitely not the way to happiness.

Spending time in Kṛṣṇa's temple has made me realize that if all my stuff disappeared in a moment, it wouldn't matter. Because worshiping Kṛṣṇa, serving Him, continually thinking of Him, spreading His message—that's what's important. And I really don't need any stuff at all to do that.

I have to admit, I'm not completely over my stuff addiction, but I am getting there. And my love of things is slowly being replaced with love of chanting and association and *darṣana* and service.

Anna Mace
London, UK

Kṛṣṇa consciousness has made me a better person

in so many ways. By begging Kṛṣṇa to take the desire away, I was able to give up smoking. I've become more aware of other living entities and try not to needlessly kill them or hurt their bodies. By the good influence of my spiritual master and senior devotees, I'm learning to think before I speak; I'm learning to see humanity as one big extended family rather than separate countries or states; I'm learning to see likeness rather than differences; I'm learning to be more gentle and not harsh or brash. I smile more than ever before.

Jāmbavatī Devī Dāsī
Austin, Texas

To access the mercy of Caitanya Mahāprabhu I am trying

to live a life of good character. I am also trying to become a selfless servant of others by putting conscience before pleasure. This inspiration I get from *Bhagavad-gītā,* where Arjuna is ready to beg rather kill his own kinsmen. Before, I never thought of imbibing such essential qualities. I thank Śrīla Prabhupāda's movement, which gave me a life of character and integrity.

Amritanshu Srivastava
Pune, India ❁

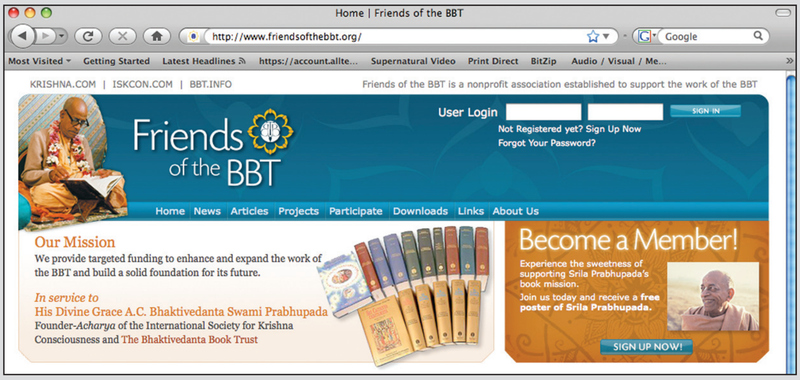
HERE'S THE NEXT QUESTION:

Choose a common expression and apply it to Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Go to Krishna.com/inyourownwords and let us know. Please keep your answer to under 150 words. Replies will appear in our Nov/Dec issue. Deadline for submissions is Aug 15.

e-Krishna

Profiles of Kṛṣṇa-related websites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Online Newsletters—Subscribe to an email list and you can keep up to date with what is happening at your local temple. An online newsletter will let you know about upcoming programs and remind you of the date and time of the next holy appearance day or Ekādaśī fast. You'll be able to stay informed of who's visiting and all the latest news. All you need is an email address.

For example, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gopīnātha Mandir in Sydney, Australia, has a regular newsletter. Each week the temple sends an email containing an outline of the latest edition. Click on a link to open a page in your web browser and find the newsletter and all the latest information.

A recent newsletter from the Sydney temple has photos of the latest festival and notices of the coming Rathayātrā and other events. It describes which classes will be conducted for the *bhakti* program on Sunday and what will be happening at the Sunday feast. You can sign up for the Seva Club and find some handy links to websites of interest.

Go to: **www.iskcon.com.au/E_newsletter.html** to see the most recent edition.

Your local temple may offer an email newsletter to help keep you in touch with what's going on in your area. Check out the temple web site to find out. Your favorite devotee websites may also have email newsletters you can subscribe to.

Here are some popular websites that offer an online subscription newsletter.

Sign up on the ISKCON news website (**www.news.iskcon.com/**) and get updates on all the new content posted each week. News from the community of devotees around the world is delivered weekly to your inbox, where you can look at it when you are ready.

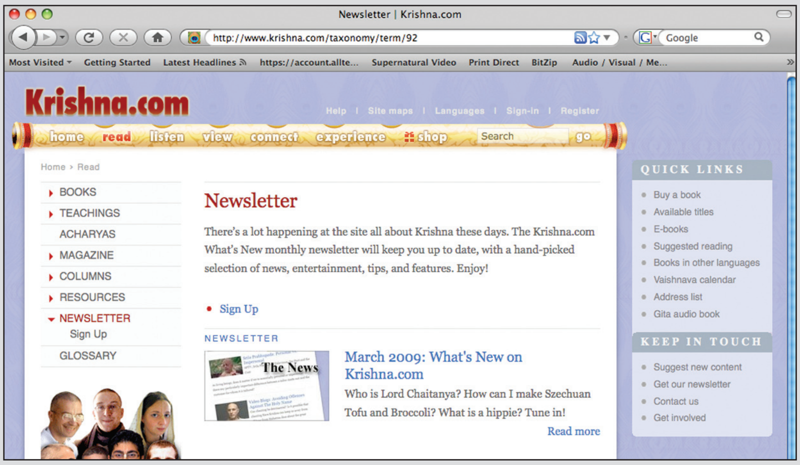
Krishna.com offers a choice of newsletters, including Krishna.com Newsletter, Thought-a-week, Sanskrit Word-a-week, Verse-a-week, Krishna.com Store Newsletter, and Krishna.com Store Deal-of-the-week.

Find out what live events are scheduled and browse a handpicked selection of news, entertainment, tips, and new features. Go to: **http://www.krishna.com/taxonomy/term/92**, where you can read previous newsletters and sign up to receive the new ones.

The newsletter of the Friends of the BBT (Bhaktivedanta Book Trust) includes the latest BBT news and announcements, as well as people profiles, stories about book distribution, and information about projects by Friends of the BBT that you can support. Go to: **www.friendsofthebbt.org/keepintouch** to join the mailing list.

The Care for Cows website produces a full-color newsletter that includes stories about the business of cow protection and pictures of beautiful cows. Go to: **www.careforcows.org/subscribe_to_our_newsletter/** and keep yourself informed about the protection of Kṛṣṇa's favorite animal.

—Antony Brennan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HOW I CAME TO KṚṢṆA CONSCIOUSNESS

FINDING INDIA'S SPIRITUAL CULTURE IN AMERICA

An Indian immigrant to America discovers the true substance of the religion of his youth.

by Īśvara Purī Dāsa

Yamarāja Dāsa

I AM INDIAN by origin, but I came to the U.S.A. as a graduate student in January of 1964. I was part of the first wave of immigrants from my country, and we all found this place very different. So many colors of people and so many types of landscape. Above all, there were so many opportunities. In America, even a janitor could own a car!

Of course, more opportunities meant more ways to engage in sinful activity as well. Although I was raised as a vegetarian and even attended a strictly vegetarian college in India, I never really knew the reason. So when I got my graduate student visa to attend the University of Arizona, some of my relatives in India decided to give me practice in eating mutton and chicken before I left. They kept telling me to get used to it, because meat was all that was available in the U.S.

After graduation, I stayed in New York for five years, from 1967 to 1972. There I was told about a place that looked like a Hindu temple you might find in Bombay but full of white Americans. Since there was no other place to worship nearby, I decided to check it out.

One weekend, I went to Henry Street in Brooklyn and discovered the Hare Kṛṣṇa Sunday Love Feast. I didn't recognize most of the mantras being chanted, but when I heard the last phrase of the prayer to Lord Nṛsiṁha—*jaya jagadīśa hare*—I thought I must be in the right place.

I was used to visiting temples and seeing holy people, but I was amazed at how dedicated and happy these Western devotees were. That first visit would not be my last.

As one of the "senior" Indians in New York (and as one of the few owners of a car), I used to take newly arrived friends and relatives around to interesting places in the city. The Henry Street Hare Kṛṣṇa temple quickly became one of the standard attractions on my tours, especially since my guests could get free Indian food.

One day, however, was especially memorable. As I entered the temple, I was surprised to see an Indian sadhu sitting at the front of the room, being fanned by two devotees. Although I had seen many such persons before, he looked especially serious and focused. Still, the first thought that came to my mind was "Here is another Indian who has come in America to make dollars, just like me." Nevertheless, as I heard from Śrīla Prabhupāda on this and a few other occasions, his speaking was so powerful, and the chanting he led so joyful, that I started to realize there was a difference between the two of us after all.

Marriage to a Pious Hindu

After working for a few years in New York and other cities, I returned to India to get married. I was keen on finding a pious girl interested in religion. Not only had my visits to the ISKCON temple impressed me, but I had also been reciting the *Hanumān Cālīsā* every Tuesday and Saturday for many years, ever since my mother had recommended it as a cure for depression. Among the several girls I met, one came from a family of faithful Durgā worshipers. She had also been raised vegetarian, and she would fast every Tuesday, since that is Durgā's day. (At that point, I wasn't so particular about whom she worshiped, as long as she worshiped.) I expressed my interest, and things moved quickly after that: I met Pushpa my first Tuesday in India, the following Tuesday we were engaged, and the next Tuesday we were married. When she joined me in America, we bought a house in Cleveland, Ohio. I chose a place near the local ISKCON temple, and even though we did not follow the regulative principles so rigidly, I made sure we attended the Sunday feast every weekend.

Over the years, one of the most appealing things to me about the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement has been how everything that the devotees do is rooted in the same Hindu tradition I grew up with, but somehow they make everything clearer and more meaningful. Whereas I used to attend *pūjās* only on special occasions, devotees go to the temple to chant and worship everyday, or even several times a day. What is more, they have a clear purpose in mind—to please the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa and grow closer to Him—whereas I used to do religious things mostly out of tradition and habit. Now, I truly relish my daily chanting and reading, through which I feel God's presence with me always.

The Māyāvādī Diagnostic Test

1) What is the highest conception of the absolute truth, the *satyam param?*

a. Brahman
b. Bhagavān

2) What is the ultimate goal of religious practice and the desired destination after death, the *paraṁ gatim*?

a. To realize we are God and merge with Him.
b. To reawaken our dormant love of God and to serve Him in His abode.

3) Are the *jīva*/*ātmā*/soul and the *īśvara*/Paramātmā/Supersoul the same or different?

a. Same
b. Different (same quality, but different quantity)

4) What is Kṛṣṇa's body made of?

a. Matter (*sattva-guṇa*)
b. Spirit (*sat-cit-ānanda*)

5) Are the *devas* like Brahmā and Śiva equal to Kṛṣṇa (or Viṣṇu) in all respects?

a. Yes
b. No

If someone answers "a" to any of these questions, then his or her philosophy is tinged by impersonalism and therefore does not purely represent the true conclusion of the Vedic scriptures.

Another difference is the lectures. In every other Hindu temple I've ever been to, the featured speaker gives a discourse—usually with jokes and popular songs interjected—and then everyone leaves. But in ISKCON, hearing is serious business. After every class, the speaker will ask for questions. This caught me off guard the first few times: Was I supposed to really be listening? I thought just being there was enough. Now, I really enjoy and appreciate the opportunity to learn, and I am a regular inquirer.

Learning About Personalism

The biggest difference between the Hinduism I was familiar with and Śrīla Prabhupāda's Kṛṣṇa consciousness has to do with the issue of personalism. Only in ISKCON did I learn the truth behind the different *devas* and the actual nature of God; everywhere else these topics just got waved away with a quick "Everything is one." I have even developed a "Māyāvādī Diagnostic Test" [see sidebar], which I use to help my relatives and other Indians understand the difference between personalism and impersonalism.

For these reasons and more (like *prasādam*!), I continued to regularly attend feasts and festivals at my local Hare Kṛṣṇa temple through both the birth of my two children and our family's eventual move to Irvine, California. Here, the closest temple is in Laguna Beach and is presided over by Śrī Pañca Tattva (Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His four main associates). The president at the time, Baḍa Haridāsa, and his wife, Kośarūpā, eventually convinced my family to become vegetarian and to enroll as ISKCON Life Members. We then made further spiritual progress when we started attending the Nāma Haṭṭa programs of Nirantara Dāsa every weekend, held in homes throughout southern California.

Meeting My Guru

The final step in my capture by Kṛṣṇa was when I met my spiritual master. I've always been interested in shooting home videos, so when we hosted His Holiness Bhakti Cāru Swami for a home program in 2000, I asked how I could participate in his film biography of Śrīla Prabhupāda, *Abhay Charan.* I thought he would let me be part of the camera crew, or even perform, but instead he said he was looking for a mature person to drive around the main actor, Somayajulu. I decided to take the assignment, and somehow being in the association of devotees day and night for three weeks inspired me to maintain the regulative principles and chant sixteen rounds on my beads like everybody else.

Over this same time period, I felt inspired by Bhakti Cāru Swami, and in June of 2003 my wife and I took initiation from him at the New Dwarka temple in Los Angeles. Since that time, my devotional life has become much more active. I've found a novel and interesting way to learn *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in the form of Nirantara Dāsa's home-study program. He has created open-book tests based on the English translations for each chapter in these scriptures, and he sends and grades them via e-mail.

I also try to share Kṛṣṇa consciousness with those I meet. When I go for my daily *japa* walk, people often initiate a conversation with me when they see my bead bag. Usually they think I've broken my hand, but then I explain the chanting to them and give them an invitation to the Laguna Beach temple. Once, the manager of a local supermarket asked about my neck beads. I told him they were made from a special plant called Tulasī, which grows in India and is spiritually powerful. He wanted to know where he could buy some for himself, because he was going through a divorce and was feeling very stressed. I brought him a spare set the next day, and when we met several weeks later, he thanked me. He has even started chanting.

As for the future, I am currently working toward getting second (brahminical) initiation, and I'm also trying to plan the *vānaprastha* (retired) stage of my life. My wife and I got so much out of participating in the thirty-day Vraja Maṇḍala Parikramā that His Holiness Lokanāth Swami organizes every year that we're thinking of moving back to India. Although it is tempting to live in either Vṛndāvana or in my spiritual master's home base of Ujjain, thanks to Śrīla Prabhupāda I know I will be able to make spiritual progress wherever I go. And I'll never forget that it wasn't until I left India to come to America that I learned what my native culture was really all about. ❁

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Kadamba Kānana Swami, Sureśvara Dāsa

Lakṣmīmaṇi Devī Dāsī, Śyāmala-sakhī Devī Dāsī, Nandā Devī Dāsī,
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Exploring LOVE

What is love? Where is it? And how can we get it?

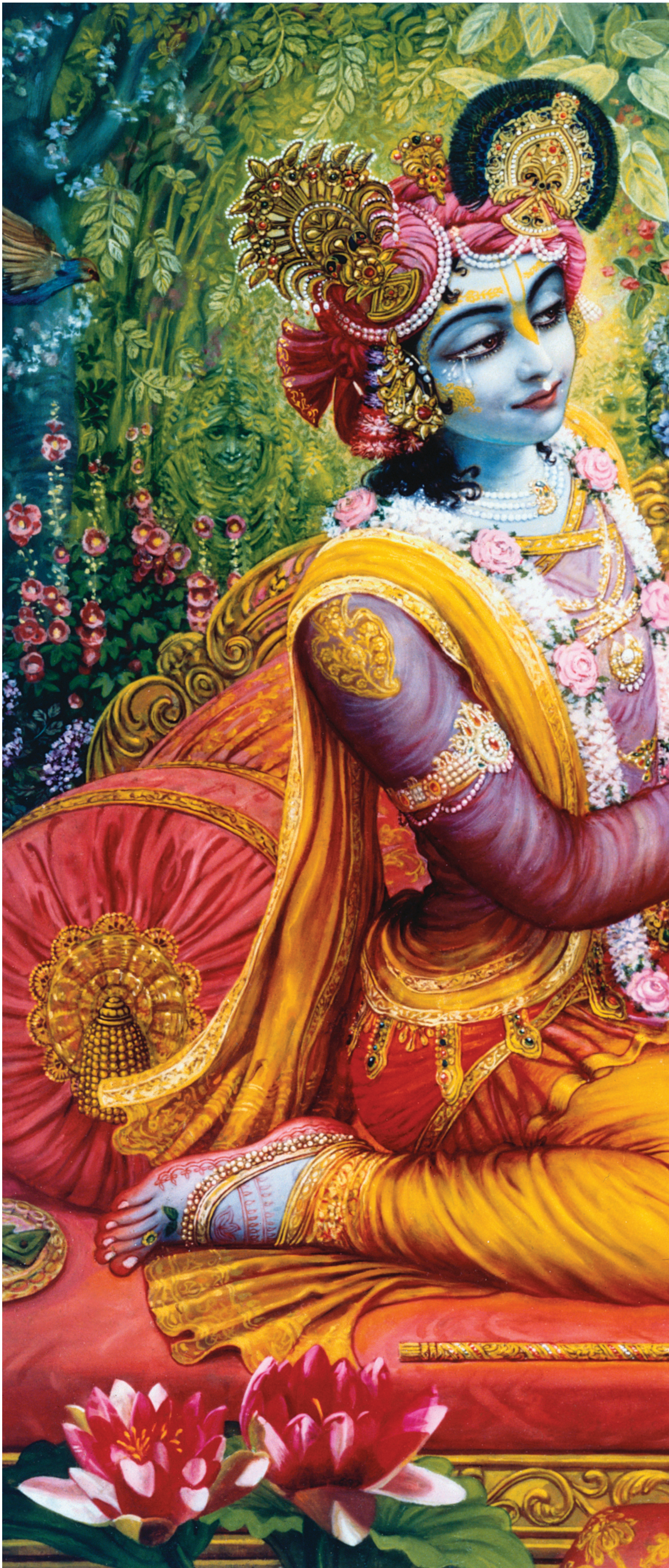
by Viśākhā Devī Dāsī

LOVE, WE ARE TOLD, is all we need. It is the subject of numberless books, songs, films, plays, sonnets, articles, conversations, and advertisements; it is meditated on, longed for, and bemoaned; it is a source of anguish, ecstasy, and everything in between. Yet despite our ability today to acquire many things, love —or loving relationships with our friends, spouses, children, parents—often eludes us.

Why? Let us explore the nature of true love—the warm, deep, personal, and profoundly tender feeling of affection one person has for another. Why, even though we crave it, does it bewitchingly escape us?

True Love's Characteristics

True love is not casual but is an act of will that requires the lover's concentration on and commitment to the beloved (in Sanskrit called *āsakta-manāḥ*—"mind attached"). In other words, love is about my beloved's—and not my own—thoughts, feelings, and desires. True love is selfless. One who would love is concerned with and alert to the beloved in every sphere of life. In fact, one who would love sees everything in relation to the beloved and sees the beloved everywhere. This does not mean losing oneself in the infatuation of love, but finding oneself. Those who truly love understand their own identity (*vijñāna*—"realized



Right: Spiritual love finds its ultimate expression in the relationship of Rādha and Kṛṣna.

Painting by Yadurāṇī Devī Dāsī

knowledge”), and they act in accord with that understanding.

True love can be practiced only in freedom—that is, when the one who would love is not driven by selfish desire and thus controlled by lust, greed, envy, anger, or any kind of personal ambition.

“Action in freedom has got some meaning,” Śrīla Prabhupāda says, “but when we are not free —when we are in the clutches of *māyā* [illusion]—our so-called freedom has no value.”

Those who would love are self-disciplined in all aspects of life because a lack of self-discipline means slavery to sensual demands. In Kṛṣṇa’s words: “While contemplating the objects of the senses, a person develops attachment for them, and from such attachment lust develops, and from lust anger arises. From anger, complete delusion arises, and from delusion bewilderment of memory. When memory is bewildered, intelligence is lost, and when intelligence is lost one falls down again into the material pool.” (*Bhagavad-gītā* 2.62–63) Without self-discipline, without sense control, there is no freedom, and without freedom we are driven by passion, not by love. On the other hand, love keeps self-discipline from becoming dry and burdensome. So, self-discipline allows love to develop, and that love keeps self-discipline fresh rather than hackneyed or touched by either pride or resentment.

Self-discipline allows love to develop, and that love keeps self-discipline fresh.

Next, true love is unmotivated (*ahaitukī*—“causeless”). One who would love gives pleasure to the beloved without conditions, without expectation of return, without calculating “Am I getting as much as I’m giving?”

True love is also patient, determined, enthusiastic, and unceasing (*apratihatā*—“unbroken”); it desires the good of the beloved from whatever source that good may come. And it is an act of faith: One who would love trusts the beloved. Whoever is of little faith will also be of little love.

More, one who would love hears from the beloved (*śṛṇu*—“try to hear”), takes the beloved’s words to heart, and remembers them with great pleasure. True love inspires a vibrant memory that ever renews the lover’s bond with the beloved and ever reminds the lover of the beloved’s uniqueness and supreme place in the lover’s heart.

Our Loveless World

These pristine qualities of true love appeal deeply to us because we want to love and be loved to this standard. But in the name of love our modern age propounds self-gratification—the antithesis of love. If you please my senses, my self-image, and my self-esteem, I may “love” you. But if you fail in this, we’ll never have a deep and lasting connection. This is selfish desire, and a person in its grip is at its mercy. Selfish desire destroys our objectivity and chains us to society’s massive, pervasive, and degrading suggestion-apparatus.

How can we rid ourselves of these unseen chains that are more binding than outer chains? Each one of us is called upon to become free, to make a fundamental shift from selfishness to selflessness, from me-centered to thee-centered (or, especially, Thee-centered) life. Then we will no longer wonder if we are capable of true love or if such love even exists.

Śrīla Prabhupāda writes:

> In the material world there is no such thing as a lover’s wanting to please the senses of his beloved. Actually, in the material world, everyone wants mainly to gratify his own personal senses.
>
> —*The Nectar of Devotion,*
> Chapter 15

> Today in the material world I may be relishing my love for my son, but tomorrow my son may be my greatest enemy. There is no eternity in this kind of love. Or, if my son does not become my enemy, he may die. Today I may love some man or woman, but tomorrow we may break up. All of this is due to the defects of the material world.
>
> —*Teachings of Lord Kapila,*
> Chapter 13

> So-called love here means that “you gratify my senses, I’ll gratify your senses,” and as soon as that gratification stops, immediately there is divorce, separation, quarrel, and hatred. So many things are going on under this false conception of love.
>
> —*The Science of Self-Realization,*
> Chapter 7

With some introspection, we discover that the word *love* is a gargantuan misnomer for what is commonly called love, for it is not love at all.

> When a living entity comes in contact with the material creation, his eternal love for Kṛṣṇa is transformed into lust, in association with the mode of passion. Or, in other words, the sense of love of God becomes transformed into lust. . . .”
>
> —*Bhagavad-gītā* 3.37, Purport

> Lust and love have different characteristics, just as iron and gold have different natures. The desire to gratify one’s own senses is *kāma* [lust], but the desire to please the senses of Lord Kṛṣṇa is *prema* [love]. . . . Therefore lust and love are quite different. Lust is like dense darkness, but love is like the bright sun.
>
> —*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*
> *Ādi-līlā* 1.4.164, 165, 171

Each of us is a spirit soul, part of Kṛṣṇa and qualitatively one with Him. In our present state, we want to relish pleasure through our senses: We want to be happy by enjoying what we see, taste, hear, touch, smell, or think of. Originally our pleasurable exchanges were between us and the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa—between the spirit soul with spiritual senses and the spiritual whole. In associating and exchanging with Him, in giving Him pleasure, we relish fullness and are actually happy. Now, however, we are in material existence, covered with a material body, mind, and senses. We try to experience pleasure through these coverings, and when that pleasure is intense, we call it love. This "love," however, has none of the qualities of true love: It is selfish, undisciplined, motivated, temporary, calculating, driven by one's needs—”Did I receive as much as I gave?"

In short it is lust, a perverted reflection of love. Only love, not lust, can satisfy us, because love is the genuine emotion of the soul while lust is that emotion misdirected; love is reality, lust illusion. Trying to be satisfied by lust is like trying to slake one's thirst in a mirage.

Lust has various guises: "My Lord, due to Your illusory energy, all living beings in this material world have forgotten their real constitutional position, and out of ignorance they are always desirous of material happiness in the form of society, friendship, and love." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 4.20.31) Sooner or later our attachment for anything material will disappoint, dissatisfy, and frustrate us because everything material deteriorates. Therefore the goal of human life is to turn lust into love. True love is already present in our heart, where it has always been, and our noble task is to free it of the distortion of lust. To do this we approach the supreme lovable object, who is worthy to accept and reciprocate our love.

A World Full of Love

In the material world we have an inkling of love due to the continuous and unconditional love within each of us—our original love of God, Kṛṣṇa. The process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness turns our love toward Kṛṣṇa and away from anything not fit to love. As a child is fully satisfied in its mother's lap, we will be fully satisfied, joyful, and alive when we come in touch with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. We do this under the guidance of His representative: "Just try to learn the truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him submissively and render service unto him. The self-realized souls can impart knowledge unto you because they have seen the truth." (*Bhagavad-gītā* 4.34)

Like our love for Kṛṣṇa, our love for the bona fide spiritual master is meant to be selfless, as is our love for the spiritual master's genuine followers. Without expectation of return, those who follow the spiritual master share their understandings and enthusiasm in heartfelt exchanges. Kṛṣṇa says, "The thoughts of My pure devotees dwell in Me, their lives are fully devoted to My service, and they derive great satisfaction and bliss from always enlightening one another and conversing about Me." (*Bhagavad-gītā* 10.9). In such exchanges all are rewarded with transcendental pleasure.

And that pleasure expands. Love of Kṛṣṇa broadens to include all His parts—every living entity—including ourselves: "Missing Kṛṣṇa means missing one's self also. Real self-realization and realization of Kṛṣṇa go together simultaneously. For example, seeing oneself in the morning means seeing the sunrise also; without seeing the sunshine

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no one can see himself. Similarly, unless one has realized Kṛṣṇa there is no question of self-realization.” (*The Nectar of Devotion,* Preface)

Realization is Kṛṣṇa’s gift to us, offered through the knowledge the spiritual master imparts: “Having obtained real knowledge from a self-realized soul, you will never fall again into illusion, for by this knowledge you will see that all living beings are but part of the Supreme, or, in other words, that they are Mine.” (*Bhagavad-gītā* 4.35)

Going from Here to There

How to come to this coveted platform? It requires a cultivation that begins with hearing about Kṛṣṇa, for by such hearing we are transported beyond all externals—whether social, economic, political, religious, or anything else. By hearing about Kṛṣṇa, we awaken our true self and reunite with Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Self. “Simply by giving aural reception to this Vedic literature, the feeling for loving devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, sprouts up at once to extinguish the fire of lamentation, illusion, and fearfulness.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.7.7)

Our life is meant for extricating ourselves from the muck of “me first” and returning to the glory of “You first.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda explains:

> Loving devotional service to the Lord begins with hearing about the Lord. There is no difference between the Lord and the subject matter heard about Him. The Lord is absolute in all respects, and thus there is no difference between Him and the subject matter heard about Him. Therefore, hearing about Him means immediate contact with Him by the process of vibration of the transcendental sound. And the transcendental sound is so effective that it acts at once by removing all material affections mentioned above. . . . The conclusion is that simply by hearing the Vedic literature *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* one can have direct connection with the Supreme Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and thereby one can attain the highest perfection of life by transcending worldly miseries, illusion and fearfulness.
>
> —*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* 1.7.7 Purport

> If we make our friendship with Kṛṣṇa, it will never break. If we make our master Kṛṣṇa, we will never be cheated. If we love Kṛṣṇa as our son, He will never die. If we love Kṛṣṇa as our lover, He will be the best of all, and there will be no separation. Because Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Lord, He is unlimited and has an unlimited number of devotees. Some are trying to love Him as lover or husband, and therefore Kṛṣṇa accepts this role. In whatever way we approach Kṛṣṇa, He will accept us . . .
>
> —*Rāja Vidyā,* Chapter 8

Spiritual Synergism

Real love then, along with the happiness that accompanies it, is not of the mundane sphere. In the final analysis it belongs to the spirit soul and the Supreme Person. Our life is meant for culturing and cultivating real love. It is meant for extricating ourselves from the muck and mire of “me first” and returning to the glory of “You first.” It is meant for tasting the happiness that comes from pleasing Kṛṣṇa and His devotees. Cultivating Kṛṣṇa consciousness exhumes the love inherent within us. And as that love blossoms, Kṛṣṇa reveals Himself: “To those who are constantly devoted to serving Me with love, I give the understanding by which they can come to Me.” (*Bhagavad-gītā* 10.10)

Devotees want to satisfy the Lord in all respects, and the Lord wants to satisfy His devotees even more than they want to satisfy Him. Although the devotees expect and desire nothing, they receive more from their devotional service than they give. Such are the mysterious exchanges of love. The Lord says, “The pure devotee is always within the core of My heart, and I am always in the heart of the pure devotee. My devotees do not know anything else but Me, and I do not know anyone else but them.” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 9.4.68) And: “A devotee observes Me in all beings and also sees every being in Me. Indeed, the self-realized person sees Me, the same Supreme Lord, everywhere. For one who sees Me everywhere and sees everything in Me, I am never lost, nor is he ever lost to Me.” (*Bhagavad-gītā* 6.29–30) The devotee is always thinking of Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa is always thinking of His devotee. “Those who always worship Me with exclusive devotion, meditating on My transcendental form—to them I carry what they lack, and I preserve what they have.” (*Bhagavad-gītā* 9.22)

Unflinching love for Kṛṣṇa, awakened by divine mercy, is the highest perfection. It is a transcendental achievement so valuable that no material happiness can compare to the happiness it brings. One who develops pure love is completely satisfied.

In the devotees’ loving relationships with Kṛṣṇa, they ask for no payment. But rewards come, and they are much greater than anything earned in the material world, for Kṛṣṇa’s rewards, like His love, are without limit. ❁

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BOOK SECTION: ŚRĪMAD-BHĀGAVATAM

Referred to as "the ripe fruit of the tree of Vedic literature," *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the most complete and authoritative exposition of Vedic knowledge. Five thousand years ago the great sage Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana Vyāsa composed this *purāṇa,* or history, to explain the essence of spiritual knowledge. Here we present *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in serialized form, with the original Sanskrit text, transliteration, word meanings, translation, and purports by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, founder-*ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

DHRUVA MAHĀRĀJA'S YOGA

Desiring an audience with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, prince Dhruva practices yoga with extreme determination.

CANTO 4: CHAPTER 8

72 त्रिरात्रान्ते त्रिरात्रान्ते कपित्थबदराशनः
आत्मवृत्त्यनुसारेण मासं निन्येऽर्चयन्हरिम्

tri-rātrānte tri-rātrānte
kapittha-badarāśanaḥ
ātma-vṛtty-anusāreṇa
māsaṁ ninye 'rcayan harim

tri—three; *rātra-ante*—at the end of night; *tri*—three; *rātra-ante*—at the end of night; *kapittha-badara*—fruits and berries; *aśanaḥ*—eating; *ātma-vṛtti*—just to preserve the body; *anusāreṇa*—as it was necessary, minimum; *māsam*—one month; *ninye*—passed away; *arcayan*—worshiping; *harim*—the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

For the first month Dhruva Mahārāja ate only fruits and berries on every third day, only to keep his body and soul together, and in this way he progressed in his worship of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

PURPORT: *Kapittha* is a flower which is known in Indian vernacular as *kayeta.* We do not find an English equivalent for the name of this flower, but its fruit is generally not accepted by human beings; it is eaten by monkeys in the forest. ① Dhruva Mahārāja, however, accepted such fruits, not for luxurious feasting but just to keep his body and soul together. The body needs food, but a devotee should not accept foodstuff to satisfy the tongue in sense gratification. It is recommended in *Bhagavad-gītā* that one should accept as much food as necessary to keep the body fit, but one should not eat for luxury.

Dhruva Mahārāja is an *ācārya,* and by undergoing severe austerities and penances he teaches us how one should execute devotional service. We must carefully know the process of Dhruva Mahārāja's service; how severely he passed his days will be shown in later verses. We should always remember that to become a bona fide devotee of the Lord is not an easy task, but in this age, by the mercy

(1) Why did Dhruva Mahārāja eat fruits generally not eaten by human beings?

of Lord Caitanya, it has been made very easy. But if we do not follow even the liberal instructions of Lord Caitanya, how can we expect to discharge our regular duties in devotional service? It is not possible in this age to follow Dhruva Mahārāja in his austerity, but the principles must be followed; we should not disregard the regulative principles given by our spiritual master, for they make it easier for the conditioned soul.

As far as our ISKCON movement is concerned, we simply ask that one observe the four prohibitive rules, chant sixteen rounds and, instead of indulging in luxurious eating for the tongue, simply accept *prasāda* offered to the Lord. This does not mean that with our fasting the Lord should also fast. The Lord should be given foodstuff which is as nice as possible. But we should not make it a point to satisfy our own tongues. As far as possible we should accept simple foodstuff, just to keep the body and soul together to execute devotional service.

It is our duty to remember always that in comparison to Dhruva Mahārāja we are insignificant. ② We cannot do anything like what Dhruva Mahārāja did for self-realization because we are absolutely incompetent to execute such service. But by Lord Caitanya's mercy we have been given all concessions possible for this age, so at least we should always remember that neglect of our prescribed duties in devotional service will not make us successful in the mission we have undertaken. It is our duty to follow in the footsteps of Dhruva Mahārāja, for he was very determined. We should also be determined to finish our duties in executing devotional service in this life; we should not wait for another life to finish our job.

(2) Why should we not imitate Dhruva Mahārāja's method of service?

73 द्वितीयं च तथा मासं षष्ठे षष्ठेऽर्भको दिने
तृणपर्णादिभिः शीर्णैः कृतान्नोऽभ्यर्चयन्विभुम्

dvitīyaṁ ca tathā māsaṁ
ṣaṣṭhe ṣaṣṭhe 'rbhako dine
tṛṇa-parṇādibhiḥ śīrṇaiḥ
kṛtānno 'bhyarcayan vibhum

dvitīyam—the next month; *ca*—also; *tathā*—as mentioned above; *māsam*—month; *ṣaṣṭhe ṣaṣṭhe*—every sixth day; *arbhakaḥ*—the innocent boy; *dine*—on days; *tṛṇa-parṇa-ādibhiḥ*—by grasses and leaves; *śīrṇaiḥ*—which were dry; *kṛta-annaḥ*—made for his food; *abhyarcayan*—and thus continued his method of worship; *vibhum*—for the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

In the second month Dhruva Mahārāja ate only every six days, and for his eatables he took dry grass and leaves. Thus he continued his worship.

74 तृतीयं चानयन्मासं नवमे नवमेऽहनि
अब्भक्ष उत्तमश्लोकमुपाधावत्समाधिना

tṛtīyaṁ cānayan māsaṁ
navame navame 'hani
ab-bhakṣa uttamaślokam
upādhāvat samādhinā

tṛtīyam—the third month; *ca*—also; *ānayan*—passing; *māsam*—one month; *navame navame*—on each ninth; *ahani*—on the day; *ap-bhakṣaḥ*—drinking water only; *uttama-ślokam*—the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is worshiped by selected verses; *upādhāvat*—worshiped; *samādhinā*—in trance.

In the third month he drank water only every nine days. Thus he remained completely in trance and worshiped the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is adored by selected verses.

75 चतुर्थमपि वै मासं द्वादशे द्वादशेऽहनि
वायुभक्षो जितश्वासो ध्यायन्देवमधारयत्

caturtham api vai māsaṁ
dvādaśe dvādaśe 'hani
vāyu-bhakṣo jita-śvāso
dhyāyan devam adhārayat

caturtham—fourth; *api*—also; *vai*—in that way; *māsam*—the month; *dvādaśe dvādaśe*—on the twelfth; *ahani*—day; *vāyu*—air; *bhakṣaḥ*—eating; *jita-śvāsaḥ*—controlling the breathing process; *dhyāyan*—meditating; *devam*—the Supreme Lord; *adhārayat*—worshiped.

In the fourth month Dhruva Mahārāja became a complete master of the breathing exercise, and thus he inhaled air only every twelfth day. In this way he became completely fixed in his position and worshiped the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

76 पञ्चमे मास्यनुप्राप्ते जितश्वासो नृपात्मजः
ध्यायन् ब्रह्म पदैकेन तस्थौ स्थाणुरिवाचलः

pañcame māsy anuprāpte
jita-śvāso nṛpātmajaḥ
dhyāyan brahma padaikena
tasthau sthāṇur ivācalaḥ

pañcame—in the fifth; *māsi*—in the month; *anuprāpte*—being situated; *jita-śvāsaḥ*—and still controlling the breathing; *nṛpa-ātmajaḥ*—the son of the King; *dhyāyan*—meditating; *brahma*—the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *padā ekena*—with one leg; *tasthau*—stood; *sthāṇuḥ*—just like a column; *iva*—like; *acalaḥ*—without movement.

By the fifth month, Mahārāja Dhruva, the son of the King, had controlled his breathing so perfectly that he was able to stand on only one leg, just as a column stands, without motion, and concentrate his mind fully on the Parabrahman.

77 सर्वतो मन आकृष्य हृदि भूतेन्द्रियाशयम्
ध्यायन्भगवतो रूपं नाद्राक्षीत्किञ्चनापरम्

sarvato mana ākṛṣya
hṛdi bhūtendriyāśayam
dhyāyan bhagavato rūpaṁ
nādrākṣīt kiñcanāparam

sarvataḥ—in all respects; *manaḥ*—mind; *ākṛṣya*—concentrating; *hṛdi*—in the heart; *bhūta-indriya-āśayam*—resting place of the senses and the objects of the senses; *dhyāyan*—meditating; *bhagavataḥ*—of the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *rūpam*—form; *na adrākṣīt*—did not see; *kiñcana*—anything; *aparam*—else.

He completely controlled his senses and their objects, and in this way he fixed his mind, without diversion to anything else, upon the form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

PURPORT: The yogic principles of meditation are clearly explained here. One has to fix one's mind upon the form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead without diversion to any other objective. ③ It is not that one can meditate or concentrate on an impersonal objective. To try to do so is simply a waste of time, for it is unnecessarily troublesome, as explained in *Bhagavad-gītā.*

78 आधारं महदादीनां प्रधानपुरुषेश्वरम्
ब्रह्म धारयमाणस्य त्रयो लोकाश्चकम्पिरे

ādhāraṁ mahad-ādīnāṁ
pradhāna-puruṣeśvaram
brahma dhārayamāṇasya
trayo lokāś cakampire

ādhāram—repose; *mahat-ādīnām*—of the material sum total known as the *mahat-tattva; pradhāna*—the chief; *puruṣa-īśvaram*—master of all living entities; *brahma*—the Supreme Brahman, the Personality of Godhead; *dhārayamāṇasya*—having taken into the heart; *trayaḥ*—the three planetary systems; *lokāḥ*—all the planets; *cakampire*—began to tremble.

When Dhruva Mahārāja thus captured the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is the refuge of the total material creation and who is the master of all living entities, the three worlds began to tremble.

PURPORT: In this verse the particular word *brahma* is very significant. ④ *Brahman* refers to one who not only is the greatest, but has the potency to expand to an unlimited extent. How was it possible for Dhruva Mahārāja to capture Brahman within his heart? This question has been very nicely answered by Jīva Gosvāmī. He says that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the origin of Brahman, for since He comprises everything material and spiritual, there cannot be anything greater than He. In the *Bhagavad-gītā* also the Supreme Godhead says, "I am the resting place of Brahman." Many persons, especially the Māyāvādī philosophers, consider Brahman the biggest, all-expanding substance, ⑤ but according to this verse and other Vedic literatures, such as *Bhagavad-gītā,* the resting place of Brahman is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, just as the resting place of the sunshine is the sun globe. ⑥ Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, therefore, says that since the transcendental form of the Lord is the seed of all greatness, He is the Supreme Brahman. ⑦ Since the Supreme Brahman was situated in the heart of Dhruva Mahārāja, he became heavier than the heaviest, and therefore everything trembled in all three worlds and in the spiritual world.

⑧ The *mahat-tattva,* or the sum total of the material creation, is to be understood to be the ultimate end of all universes, including all the living entities therein. ⑨ Brahman is the resort of the *mahat-tattva,* which includes all material and spiritual entities. It is described in this connection that the Supreme Brahman, the Personality of Godhead, is the master of both *pradhāna* and *puruṣa.* ⑩ *Pradhāna* means subtle matter, such as ether. *Puruṣa* means the spiritual spark living entities who are entangled in that subtle material existence. These may also be described as *parā prakṛti* and *aparā prakṛti,* as stated in *Bhagavad-gītā.* Kṛṣṇa, being the controller of both the *prakṛtis,* is thus the master of *pradhāna* and *puruṣa.*

In the Vedic hymns also the Supreme Brahman is described as *antaḥ-praviṣṭaḥ śāstā.* This indicates that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is controlling everything and entering into everything. The *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.35) further confirms this. *Aṇḍāntara-stha-paramāṇu-cayāntara-*

(3) Why does the *Bhagavad-gītā* say that one should not meditate on an impersonal objective?
(4) To what two characteristics of God does the word *Brahman* refer?
(5) What is the resting place of Brahman?
(6) Why does Jīva Gosvāmī say the Lord is the Supreme Brahman?
(7) Why did Dhruva Mahārāja become heavier than the heaviest?
(8) What is the *mahat-tattva*?
(9) What is the resort of the *mahat-tattva*?
(10) What are *pradhāna* and *puruṣa*?

stham: He has entered not only the universes, but even the atom. In *Bhagavad-gītā* (10.42) Kṛṣṇa also says, *viṣṭabhyāham idaṁ kṛtsnam.* The Supreme Personality of Godhead controls everything by entering into everything.

By associating constantly with the Supreme Personality in his heart, Dhruva Mahārāja naturally became equal to the greatest, Brahman, by His association, and thus became the heaviest, and the entire universe trembled. In conclusion, a person who always concentrates on the transcendental form of Kṛṣṇa within his heart can very easily strike the whole world with wonder at his activities. This is the perfection of yoga performance, as confirmed in *Bhagavad-gītā* (6.47). ⑪ *Yoginām api sarveṣām:* of all yogis, the *bhakti-yogī,* who thinks of Kṛṣṇa always within his heart and engages in His loving transcendental service, is the topmost. Ordinary yogis can exhibit wonderful material activities, known as *aṣṭa-siddhi,* eight kinds of yogic perfection, but a pure devotee of the Lord can surpass these perfections by performing activities which can make the whole universe tremble.

79 यदैकपादेन स पार्थिवार्भक-
स्तस्थौ तदङ्गुष्ठनिपीडिता मही
ननाम तत्रार्धमिभेन्द्रधिष्ठिता
तरीव सव्येतरतः पदे पदे

yadaika-pādena sa pārthivārbhakas
tasthau tad-aṅguṣṭha-nipīḍitā mahī
nanāma tatrārdham ibhendra-dhiṣṭhitā
tarīva savyetarataḥ pade pade

yadā—when; *eka*—with one; *pādena*—leg; *saḥ*—Dhruva Mahārāja; *pārthiva*—the King's; *arbhakaḥ*—child; *tasthau*—remained standing; *tat-aṅguṣṭha*—his big toe; *nipīḍitā*—being pressed; *mahī*—the earth; *nanāma*—bent down; *tatra*—then; *ardham*—half; *ibha-indra*—the king of elephants; *dhiṣṭhitā*—being situated; *tarī iva*—like a boat; *savya-itarataḥ*—right and left; *pade pade*—in every step.

As Dhruva Mahārāja, the King's son, kept himself steadily standing on one leg, the pressure of his big toe pushed down half the earth, just as an elephant being carried on a boat rocks the boat left and right with his every step.

PURPORT: The most significant expression in this verse is *pārthivārbhakaḥ,* son of the King. When Dhruva Mahārāja was at home, although he was a king's son, he was prevented from getting on the lap of his father. But when he became advanced in self-realization, or devotional service, by the pressure of his toe he could push down the whole earth. That is the difference between ordinary consciousness and Kṛṣṇa consciousness. In ordinary consciousness a king's son may be refused something even by his father, but when the same person becomes fully Kṛṣṇa conscious within his heart, he can push down the earth with the pressure of his toe.

(11) Who does the *Bhagavad-gītā* say is the topmost yogi?
(12) What is *nagna-mātṛkā* logic and how does it apply to Dhruva Mahārāja?

One cannot argue, "How is it that Dhruva Mahārāja, who was prevented from getting up on the lap of his father, could press down the whole earth?" This argument is not very much appreciated by the learned, for it is an example of *nagna-mātṛkā* logic. ⑫ By this logic one would think that because his mother in her childhood was naked, she should remain naked even when she is grown up. The stepmother of Dhruva Mahārāja might have been thinking in a similar way: since she had refused to allow him to get up on the lap of his father, how could Dhruva perform such wonderful activities as pressing down the whole earth? She must have been very surprised when she learned that Dhruva Mahārāja, by concentrating constantly on the Supreme Personality of Godhead within his heart, could press down the entire earth, like an elephant who presses down the boat on which it is loaded.

80 तस्मिन्नभिध्यायति विश्वमात्मनो
द्वारं निरुध्यासुमनन्यया धिया
लोका निरुच्छ्वासनिपीडिता भृशं
सलोकपालाः शरणं ययुर्हरिम्

tasminn abhidhyāyati viśvam ātmano
dvāraṁ nirudhyāsum ananyayā dhiyā
lokā nirucchvāsa-nipīḍitā bhṛśaṁ
sa-loka-pālāḥ śaraṇaṁ yayur harim

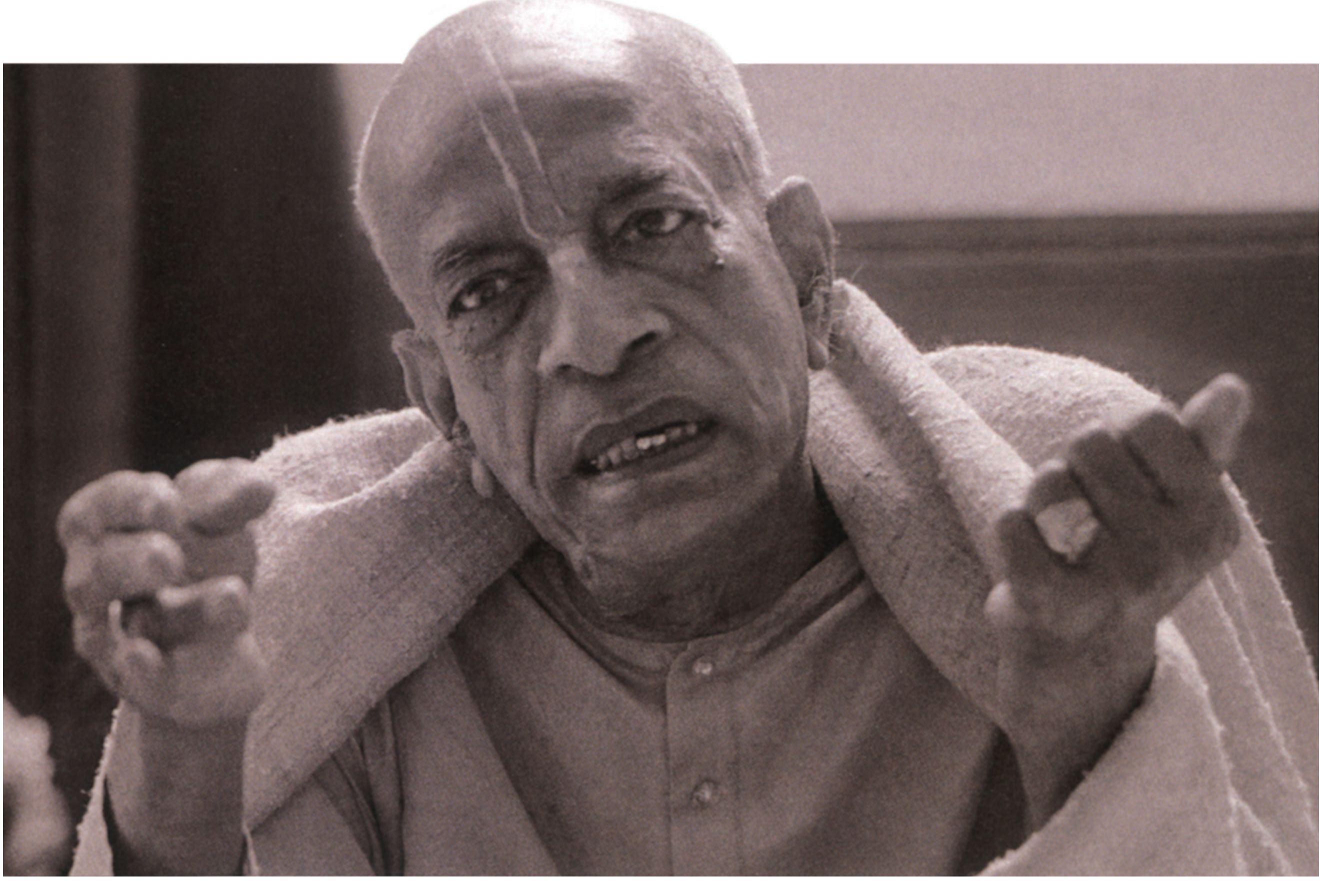
tasmin—Dhruva Mahārāja; *abhidhyāyati*—when meditating with full concentration; *viśvam ātmanaḥ*—the total body of the universe; *dvāram*—the holes; *nirudhya*—closed; *asum*—the life air; *ananyayā*—without being diverted; *dhiyā*—meditation; *lokāḥ*—all the planets; *nirucchvāsa*—having stopped breathing; *nipīḍitāḥ*—thus being suffocated; *bhṛśam*—very soon; *sa-loka-pālāḥ*—all the great demigods from different planets; *śaraṇam*—shelter; *yayuḥ*—took; *harim*—of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

When Dhruva Mahārāja became practically one in heaviness with Lord Viṣṇu, the total consciousness, due to his fully concentrating, and closing all the holes of his body, the total universal breathing became choked up, and all the great demigods in all the planetary systems felt suffocated and thus took shelter of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

[*Continued in the next issue.*]

ŚRĪLA PRABHUPĀDA SPEAKS OUT

“The Stone Deity Is Also Kṛṣṇa”



Guru Dāsa

The following conversation between His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda and several of his disciples took place in June 1974 in Paris.

Disciple: A man came to the temple a couple of days ago and argued that we really can’t say for sure that there’s life after death, so why worry about it? Better to build a more prosperous society. At least this we can understand, and it would be a meaningful accomplishment.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: He may not understand that the soul takes another body after death, but he can understand that he’ll be kicked out of his present body. Didn’t he understand this?

Disciple: He thought it was more important to engage in economic development.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Therefore he’s a fool. Suppose I am visiting here in Paris, and you say, “As soon as your visa expires you’ll be kicked out.” Shall I be interested in creating anything elaborate? I shall be kicked out after two months, so why should I construct a big building? Only a foolish rascal would do that. The rascal knows that he will be kicked out, but still he works day and night to collect bricks and stones, and he becomes a “big man.” A foolish rascal is considered a big man. Therefore *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* [2.3.19] says, *śva-viḍ-varāhoṣṭra-kharaiḥ saṁstutaḥ puruṣaḥ paśuḥ:* “Men who are like dogs, hogs, camels, and asses praise foolish rascals, the nondevotees.”

Disciple: Sometimes people argue that God has given us our senses, so we should enjoy them.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: The dog is also enjoying his senses. I say to such people, What are you enjoying that the dog doesn’t enjoy? You eat; the dog also eats. You sleep; the dog also sleeps. You enjoy sex; the dog also enjoys sex. You are afraid of your enemy; the dog is also afraid of its enemy. So what is the difference between the dog's mentality and your mentality?

God has given you the intelligence to understand that you are nothing and He is everything. Just realize it—that is intelligence. When you understand, "God is great and I am His servant," that is real intelligence. Otherwise, you'll be exactly like the dogs.

Disciple: People today have reasoned that God is dead.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: To them I reply, God is not dead; your intelligence is dead. You have a dead body, and you are proud of it. The body is just like a car. A car is dead, and if there is no driver it doesn't work. Similarly, the body is dead, and as soon as you, the soul, leave the body, it stops working. That means you are occupying a dead body. It is working only as long as you are there, but actually the body is dead. And you are decorating a dead body. All your acquisitions are simply decorations on a dead body. *Aprāṇasyaiva dehasya maṇḍanaṁ loka-rañjanam.* Some rascal may applaud, "Oh, you are so intelligent; you are decorating your body so nicely." But an intelligent man will say, "What a fool he is, that he's decorating a dead body."

Disciple: Someone might ask why we decorate the deity in the temple.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Because it is not dead. It is living. One who puts forward this argument does not know that we are decorating the real, living body.

Disciple: You say the deity is the real body, but it appears to be stone. There are no symptoms of life in the deity.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: There is life—the supreme life—but you have no eyes to see it. *Premāñjana-cchurita-bhakti-vilocanena.* A devotee can see that the deity is alive. Are we fools, rascals, that we are worshiping a dead body? You think that after reading so many scriptures we are worshiping stone? You have no eyes to see the truth. You have to purify your vision to see that Kṛṣṇa is personally present in the deity.

Disciple: Most people can't even understand the existence of the soul. So how can they understand the deity?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Therefore they have to become our students, our disciples, to understand this science. Then they will see that the stone deity is also Kṛṣṇa.

Disciple: Is my body also Kṛṣṇa, since it is made of earth, like the deity?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: No, but it is Kṛṣṇa's energy. Therefore the body should be engaged in Kṛṣṇa's service. That is Kṛṣṇa consciousness. As soon as you understand that the body is Kṛṣṇa's energy, you will not employ it for any purpose other than His service. But people do not have this realization. They think the body is theirs, or that they are the body. This is illusion.

Disciple: When impersonalistic philosophers read in *Bhagavad-gītā* [18.61] that the Supreme Lord is situated in everyone's heart, they argue that since Kṛṣṇa is in the heart of every living entity, every living entity is Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Why? If I am in a room, have I become the room? Is that argument very sound? Kṛṣṇa is within my body, and I am also within my body, but does that mean I am the body or that Kṛṣṇa is the body? Kṛṣṇa is everything, and yet, Kṛṣṇa is apart from everything. In *Bhagavad-gītā* [9.4] Kṛṣṇa says, *mayā tatam idaṁ sarvaṁ jagad avyakta-mūrtinā:* "I am spread all over the universe in My impersonal feature." *Mat-sthāni sarva-bhūtāni:* "Everything is in Me." *Na cāhaṁ teṣv avasthitaḥ:* "But I am separate from everything." This is the philosophy of simultaneous oneness and difference (*acintya-bhedābheda-tattva*).

Disciple: Other religions do not give this information?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: We are not talking religion; we are talking of science. Don't bring in "religion." There are so many religions where people are doing things blindly. Such "religion" is not our concern. We are talking of science.

Disciple: The science of how God's energies are working?

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. For example, to say that heat is fire, is that wrong?

Disciple: No, because it comes from fire.

Śrīla Prabhupāda: Yes. Heat is the energy of fire. Therefore one can say that heat is fire, but at the same time it is not fire. It is simultaneously one with fire and different from fire.

Disciple: Someone might say, "If stone is also Kṛṣṇa, then why aren't you worshiping all stones?"

Śrīla Prabhupāda: When we make the form of Kṛṣṇa in stone, then we worship stone. Not that we worship any stone. Because Kṛṣṇa is everything by the expansion of His energies, that does not mean we have to worship the dog. No. Our business is to worship the form of Kṛṣṇa. ❁

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CALENDAR

*This calendar is calculated for Māyāpur, West Bengal, India. The dates, derived from a lunar calendar, may vary by one day for other locations. For the exact dates for your area, go to **www.krishnadays.com**.*

Because the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement comes in disciplic line from Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the calendar includes not only dates relevant to all followers of the Vedic tradition but also dates relating to Lord Caitanya's associates and prominent spiritual masters in His disciplic succession.

June 8–July 9

(*Month of Vāmana*)

JULY

3—Śayanā Ekādaśī
Fasting from grains and beans.

7—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, one of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana. First month of Cāturmāsya begins (fasting from green leafy vegetables).

July 8–August 6

(*Month of Śrīdhara*)

12—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, one of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana.

15—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Lokanātha Gosvāmī, a great devotee of Lord Caitanya.

16—Anniversary of incorporation of ISKCON, in New York City, 1966.

18—Kāmikā Ekādaśī
Fasting from grains and beans.

AUGUST

1—Jhulana Yātrā (swing festival) of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda begins.

2—Pakṣvardhinī Mahā-dvādaśī
Fasting from grains and beans for Pavitropanā Ekādaśī. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, one of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana. Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Gaurīdāsa Paṇḍita, an associate of Lord Caitanya.

5—Jhulana Yātrā ends. Appearance anniversary of Lord Balarāma. Fasting till noon, followed by feasting. Second month of Cāturmāsya begins (fasting from yogurt).

Painting by Muralīdhara Dāsa

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa

August 7–September 4

(*Month of Hṛṣīkeśa*)

7—Anniversary of the departure of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda to the United States in 1965.

14—Śrī Kṛṣṇa Janmāṣṭamī, appearance anniversary of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Fasting till midnight, followed by a breakfast of Ekādaśī *prasādam* (no grains or beans). Feasting tomorrow. Call your local Hare Kṛṣṇa temple for a schedule of events.

15—Appearance anniversary of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda, Founder-*Ācārya* of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Fasting till noon, followed by feasting.

17—Annadā Ekādaśī
Fasting from grains and beans.

24—Appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Sītā Devī, the consort of Śrīla Advaita Ācārya.

27—Śrī Rādhāṣṭamī, appearance anniversary of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, Kṛṣṇa's eternal consort. Fasting till noon, followed by feasting.

31—Parśvā Ekādaśī
Fasting from grains and beans. (Fasting till noon today for Śrī Vāmana-dvādaśī tomorrow.)

SEPTEMBER

1—Śrī Vāmana-dvādaśī, appearance anniversary of Lord Vāmana, Lord Kṛṣṇa's incarnation as a dwarf *brāhmaṇa.* Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, one of the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana.

2—Appearance anniversary of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, father of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura (Śrīla Prabhupāda's spiritual master), and a pioneer in spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness in English. Fasting till noon, then feasting.

3—Disappearance anniversary of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura, foremost teacher of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa.

4—Anniversary of Śrīla Prabhupāda's accepting *sannyāsa,* the renounced order of life. Third month of Cāturmāsya begins (fasting from milk).

THE VEDIC OBSERVER

Transcendental Commentary on the Issues of the Day

Photographer: Susan Quinland-Stringer / Agency: Dreamstime.com

A Billionaire Renunciant?

by Vraja Vihārī Dāsa

Could Warren Buffet be a renunciant in disguise? The *Hindustan Times* showered appreciation on the "immensely financially endowed" gentleman for being a simple man at heart. As he toppled Bill Gates to claim the crown as the world's richest person, the media revealed Mr. Buffet's determined unwillingness to make a scene of being rich.

The *Hindustan Times* revealed Mr. Buffet's determination to keep life simple. "It's easy not to flash your cash if you have none," noted the editor, "but the CEO and chairman of Berkshire Hathaway hasn't taken a salary hike for the last quarter of a century, pays back his company expenses such as phone charges, and feels content with his annual salary of $100,000, a pittance for CEOs these days." The editorial observed that Mr. Buffet's chief financial officer gets four times that much. Mr. Buffet also drives his own car to work and "says no to all things hedonistic."

Human life: A Life of Responsibility

Warren Buffet's refusal to pursue an "I get what I want" existence—the hallmark of modern society—is refreshing to hear. At a time when crass greed masquerades as simple ambition and frugal habits are frowned upon, Mr. Buffet's reticence has few parallels. The Vedic scriptures extol the value of not artificially increasing personal wants.

īśāvāsyam idaṁ sarvaṁ
yat kiñca jagatyāṁ jagat
tena tyaktena bhuñjīthā
mā gṛdhaḥ kasya svid dhanam

"Everything animate or inanimate that is within the universe is controlled and owned by the Lord. One should therefore accept only those things necessary for himself, which are set aside as his quota, and one should not accept other things, knowing well to whom they belong." (*Śrī Īśopaniṣad,* Mantra 1)

When we recognize the proprietorship of the Supreme Lord and contribute our little worth toward ensuring that the needs of all are taken care of, we lead a life of responsibility. If, however, we regard this body as all in all and confine our ambitions and goals to making it big in this world, we restrict our scope of happiness. A deep sense of insecurity crops up with changing market conditions, twisting political fortunes, and crashing stockmarkets. These fears provoke men to abandon all moral scruples and time-honored spiritual values, creating a dog-eat-dog world. Śrīla Prabhupāda eloquently exposes the wild pursuits of modern man:

> According to nature's arrangement, living entities lower on the evolutionary scale do not eat or collect more than necessary. Consequently in the animal kingdom there is generally no economic problem or scarcity of necessities. If a bag of rice is placed in a public place, birds will come to eat a few grains and go away. A human being, however, will take away the whole bag. He will eat all his stomach can hold and then try to keep the rest in storage. According to scriptures, this collecting of more than necessary (*atyāhāra*) is prohibited. Now the entire world is suffering because of it.
>
> —*Nectar of Instruction,* Verse 2, Purport

The Eternally Dissatisfied Mind

Besides social responsibility, another reason to keep our lives simple is the personal satisfaction it guarantees. We may fulfill our desires, but our mind remains dissatisfied. "Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's need," said Gandhi, "but not every man's greed." Mr. Buffet and other rare persons of his ilk are fortunate to be spared the screaming wants of the mind. The human mind is fickle and, if let loose, knows no peace. As we unleash our passion to acquire various pleasures, the mind points out the unattained delights. And the more elusive they are, the greater the passion to possess them.

The enjoyment of all things material follows the law of diminishing marginal returns: Each successive pleasure derived from an object or person reduces our taste for that pleasure. A drastic gap occurs between the expectation of pleasure and the enjoyment experienced. To fill the gap, the mind desperately urges us to spend more, buy more, and go wild. In the ensuing race for happiness, the mind's demands remain eternally unfulfilled. It's like scratching an itch: The momentary relief is accompanied by a greater itch, and the more you scratch, the more you itch. Repeated scratching only causes pain and bleeding.

In this regard, the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* reveals the plight of Hiraṇyakaśipu, the king of the *asuras*, or anti-theists:

sa itthaṁ nirjita-kakub
eka-rāḍ viṣayān priyān
yathopajoṣaṁ bhuñjāno
nātṛpyad ajitendriyaḥ

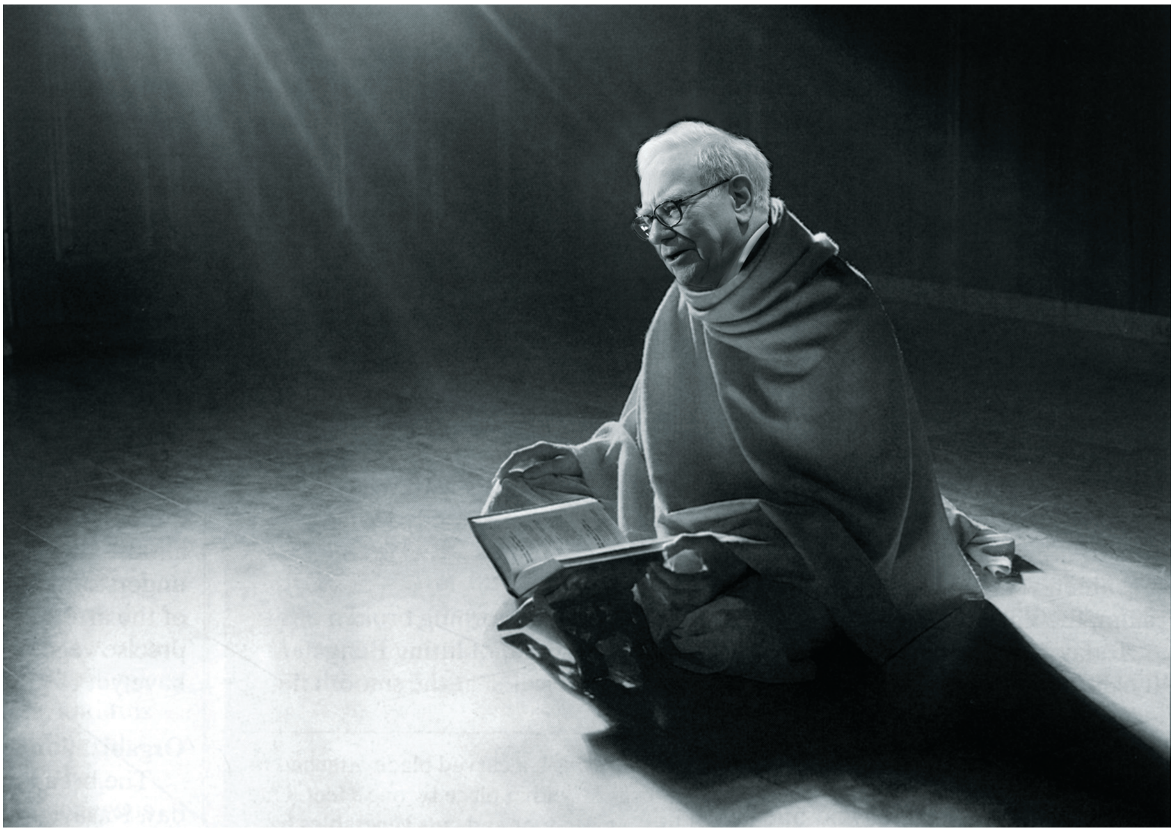
"In spite of achieving the power to control in all directions and in spite of enjoying all types of dear sense gratification as much as possible, Hiraṇyakaśipu was dissatisfied because instead of controlling his senses he remained their servant." (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam,* 7.4.19) Although the universe bowed to his command, Hiraṇyakaśipu was miserable. Eventually his unfulfilled lust and greed led to violent anger against his own son—and to his own ruination.

Connection to God: The Secret of Satisfaction

"He who is content is rich," said the wise Lao Tzu. When we lead a God-centered life, with a culture of prayer and service as the foundation, we're filled with serenity. The pushing of the restless mind to "get what I want when I want" is replaced by a desire to improve the quality of our offering to God, Kṛṣṇa. The mind's primary function is to like and dislike. The mind's constant acceptance and rejection ensures we are never peaceful and happy. Connection to Kṛṣṇa, however, helps us ignore and transcend the petty wrangling of the mind. Many devotees in the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement formerly lived lives centered on drugs, alcohol, and illicit sex. But the process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness changed all that, and now they are happy to ignore these allurements and instead happily execute the practices of devotional service.

Devotees living a God-centered life fill their hearts with loving remembrance of Kṛṣṇa. Absorption in chanting Kṛṣṇa's holy names and hearing His pastimes gives one an experience of spiritual happiness that helps one transcend the constant battering by the mind. To the extent we are connected to Kṛṣṇa, our happiness only increases with the passage of time, and simultaneously the craving for material possessions wanes.

Lessons from History



When Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared five hundred years ago as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, He revealed the glories of His devotees absorbed in loving Kṛṣṇa. Śrīdhara was a poor banana-leaf seller (*kholā-vecā*) who earned barely enough to live on. Yet he was happy to offer fifty percent of his earnings to serve the Lord, and he spent much of his time blissfully chanting and hearing about Kṛṣṇa. Lord Caitanya revealed to him His supreme majesty. He then asked Śrīdhara to request any benediction he desired. Śrīdhara wasn't tempted by unlimited riches, mystic power, or even the opulence of the kingdom of God. He desired only to remember the Lord and engage in unalloyed loving devotional service.

Similarly, Mahārāja Ambarīṣa was an ideal king who possessed the wealth of Kṛṣṇa consciousness in his heart. He used all his senses and wealth in service to Kṛṣṇa. He was the emperor of the planet, yet was the most renounced person because his life was centered on serving Kṛṣṇa and all other living entities.

Lord Caitanya's disciple Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has written,

anāsaktasya viṣayān
yathārham upayuñjataḥ
nirbandhaḥ kṛṣṇa-sambandhe
yuktaṁ vairāgyam ucyate

prāpañcikatayā buddhyā
hari-sambandhi-vastunaḥ
mumukṣubhiḥ parityāgo
vairāgyaṁ phalgu kathyate

"When one is not attached to anything, but at the same time accepts everything in relation to Kṛṣṇa, one is rightly situated above possessiveness. On the other hand, one who rejects everything without knowledge of its relationship to Kṛṣṇa is not as complete in his renunciation." (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.255–256)

Possessing Kṛṣṇa: A Higher Principle

A Kṛṣṇa conscious person knows that possessing Kṛṣṇa is a higher principle than mere renunciation. A devotee loves Kṛṣṇa and knows that everything belongs to Him.

(*please turn to page 56*)

Kīrtana-Yoga and the Mahā-Mantra

Kīrtana is a simple and effective way to commune with God.

by Satyarāja Dāsa

THE WORD *KĪRTANA* means "praise" or "glory" and is the name given to glorification of God in song, especially in call-and-response style. There are different categories of *kīrtana.* For example, *nāma-kīrtana* refers to singing God's sacred names, *līlā-kīrtana* celebrates the transcendental activities of God and His associates, *saṅkīrtana* is group singing, and *nagara-saṅkīrtana* is public chanting in the streets. There are numerous variations of these.

Closely related is *bhajana,* or prayerful song. Devotees generally stand or dance while performing *kīrtana,* and they sit to conduct *bhajana.* In addition, *bhajana* is generally more subdued than *kīrtana.* Various sects and regions in India attribute different labels to different forms of prayerful song, sometimes defining *bhajana* as a subcategory of *kīrtana* and vice versa.

Kīrtana is a simple and effective way to commune with God. The *Padma Purāṇa* tells us, "Because Kṛṣṇa's holy name and Kṛṣṇa Himself are nondifferent, the name is fully complete, pure, and eternally liberated." In the material world, all things are relative and a thing is different from its name, but in the spiritual realm a thing and its name are one. That's the nature of the Absolute.

The implications here are tremendous. If God and His name are the same, by chanting one can get close to Him in every sense of the word. The chanter is close because God's name is on his or her lips; the chanter gets purified by close association and becomes godly, cleansed, divinely inspired—thus becoming closer to God's nature; and the chanter gets close to God through the intimacy of calling His name with love and devotion, achieving the goal of yoga, or linking with Him.

Loving union with God is the ultimate effect of *kīrtana,* but *kīrtana* does

Right: Devotees chant Hare Kṛṣṇa in New York City in the early 1970s. (This photo is a favorite of the author's.)

not ask us to achieve the highest level at once. Instead, it dutifully takes us there gradually, sometimes in spite of ourselves. *Kīrtana* is joyful at any stage, and it leads to higher and higher modes of spirituality. It gradually takes us beyond the physical, mental, and intellectual strata and situates us in transcendence. Thus, whether we approach chanting as mere entertainment, as a night out, as part of a yogic regimen, or as a method for getting close to God, we benefit from the practice and move upward toward the Supreme.

Even the celestial beings mentioned in the Vedic literature want to take part in this celebration of sacred sound—kīrtana.

Kīrtana Origins

According to the sages of India, *kīrtana* transcends history: It is "imported from the spiritual realm," where God is glorified with blissful song and dance. As *kīrtana* makes its way to the material world, we find it in humanity's earliest cultures and civilizations.

For example, the *Vedas* and the *Upaniṣads,* among the world's oldest religious texts, describe the power of sound in minute detail, elaborating how certain mantras, when properly recited, reveal Ultimate Reality. *Kīrtana,* then, claims both divine origin and a history traceable to the world's earliest scriptures.

Vaiṣṇavism, whose chief manifestation in the West is known today as the Hare Kṛṣṇa movement, developed *kīrtana* into a methodical practice, or science, leading to the goal of yoga. With the help of Vaiṣṇava scriptures, such as the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and the *Bhagavad-gītā,* adherents came to understand chanting as a highly technical—if also blissful—discipline through which they could expect definite results on the spiritual path.

The scriptures state that for each world age a specific method of God realization is particularly appropriate: In Satya-yuga, millions of years ago, one attained the Absolute through deep meditation, in Tretā-yuga through opulent sacrifices, in Dvāpara-yuga through deity worship, and in Kali, the current age, through chanting the holy name of the Lord.

Even the celestial beings mentioned in the Vedic literature want to take part in this celebration of sacred sound. Lord Viṣṇu, for example, blows His conch shell as a call to spiritual awakening and in His original form as Kṛṣṇa bewitches all living beings with His silky smooth flute playing. Lord Śiva plays his threatening drum during the dance of cosmic dissolution. Goddess Sarasvatī is always depicted with a *vīṇā,* a stringed instrument, in hand. She is the divine patron of music and bestows blessings on all students of God-centered music. Lord Brahmā, Sarasvatī's husband, creates musical scales using the mantras of the *Sāma Veda* and chants *oṁ* to create the universe.

The idea that material existence is generated through sound resonates with the Bible: "In the beginning was the Word." (John 1:1) A Vedic text states, "By divine utterance the universe came into being." (*Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 1.2.4) Vedic texts tell us that sound not only instigates the flow of cosmic creation but plays a significant role in man's ultimate goal: "Liberation through sound," says the *Vedanta-sūtra* (4.4.22). Hence: *kīrtana.*

Essential Vaiṣṇava Practice

Kīrtana is the core practice of Vaiṣṇavas, originating from hoary times and the revelation of the *Vedas.* Although *bhakti* ("devotion") is eternal, it wasn't until the sixth century CE that it emerged as the core of a vibrant religious movement, with powerful yogis and alluring singer-poets transforming the countryside. They conveyed truths not only in Sanskrit, drawing on the original *Vedas,* but in vernacular languages, making full use of new compositions and contemporary song. Most productive were the Śaivite Nayanars and the Vaiṣṇava Ālvārs, whose devotional poetry might be seen as first steps in the development of modern *kīrtana.* A *bhakti* movement was in full flower, emphasizing the heart, the essence, rather than rituals and rigid observances.

Bhakti literature and devotional song spread rapidly, accommodating the growing wave of seekers and spiritual adepts that inundated the land. As a result, four major lineages arose in South India, allowing primeval knowledge to flow north and, eventually, around the world. This was done through commentary and explication, practice and revelation. The four lineages owe a debt of gratitude to the following seers: Rāmānuja (1017–1137), of the Śrī Sampradāya; Nimbārka (ca. 1130–1200), of the Kumāra Sampradāya; Madhva (1238–1317), who appeared in the Brahmā Sampradāya; and Viṣṇu Svāmī (dates unknown), who reinvigorated the Rudra Sampradāya, later reformulated by Vallabhācārya (1479–1545) as Puṣṭī Mārga. Many branches, sub-branches, and diverse traditions sprouted from these essential four. *Kīrtana* is most significant in the line of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu (1486–1533). His Gauḍīya Sampradāya, an offshoot of the Brahmā-Madhva line, inspired all of India with ecstatic song and dance, illuminating the science of *kīrtana* as never before. The Hare Kṛṣṇa movement comes in the lineage of Śrī Caitanya.

Sophisticated love poetry, systematic theology, and new revelations came from many quarters. Chief among these, perhaps, was the *Gīta-Govinda*, Jayadeva's twelfth-century Sanskrit work on the love of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Other prominent *bhakti* poets and singers included Sūra Dāsa, Tulasī Dāsa, Tūkārāma, Nāmadeva, Mīrabāi, Vidyāpati, Caṇḍīdāsa, Svāmī Haridāsa, Narottama, and Bhaktivinoda Thākura. Countless others wrote devotional songs about Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, elaborating on divine love as found in the spiritual world. Those who practice *kīrtana* today are forever indebted to them.

Only Hari-kīrtana

by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda

THE *ŚĀKTAS* [who worship various goddesses as supreme] have introduced a certain type of *kīrtana* called Kālī-kīrtana [dedicated to Goddess Kālī]. But in the Vedic scriptures there is no recommendation of Kālī-kīrtana. *Kīrtana* means Hari-kīrtana. One cannot say, "Oh, you are Vaiṣṇava. You can perform Hari-kīrtana. I shall perform Śiva-kīrtana or Devī-kīrtana or Gaṇeśa-kīrtana." No. The Vedic scriptures do not authorize any *kīrtana* other than Hari-kīrtana. *Kīrtana* means Hari-kīrtana, the glorification of Kṛṣṇa.

—*The Science of Self-Realization,* Chapter 5

The Mahā-Mantra

The Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*—Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare—is known as the greatest (*mahā*) of all mantras because it contains the potency of all other spiritual sound. Chanting the *mahā-mantra* is thus the most popular and effective form of *kīrtana.*

The *mahā-mantra* is also considered the greatest chant because unlike other mantras it aims only for service to God. While the chanter of other mantras generally wants some earthly reward—health, daily bread, the protection of loved ones—the chanter of the *mahā-mantra* asks only to be used as God's instrument, to serve Him in love and devotion without any expectation of return. Śrīla Prabhupāda gives us the following translation: "O Lord, O energy of the Lord, please engage me in Your divine service."

Since the *mahā-mantra* is composed solely of the names of God, how does one arrive at this translation? Simply put, the names composing the mantra are in the vocative case, used when petitioning or calling out to someone. So Hare means "O Rādhā," as Hare is the vocative form of Harā, a name for Rādhā, who personifies devotion to Kṛṣṇa. Since Rāma is a name for Kṛṣṇa, the *mahā-mantra* is a heartfelt petition to Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. What does the chanter of the *mahā-mantra* ask of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa? Only for the privilege of serving Them in pure love.

A Deeper Meaning

The *mahā-mantra* is a prayer with great depth that extends from a simple glorification of the Lord to an urgent request: "Please engage me in Your service."

And yet it goes further still. Great *ācāryas,* pure teachers who have passed down the mantra in disciplic succession, explain it in various deep ways. For example, Dhyānacandra Gosvāmī, one of Lord Caitanya's associates, explains it as follows: "Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa"—the first four words of the mantra—refer to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in union, celebrating Their love together (*sambhoga bhāva*). "Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa" signifies Their separation (*vipralambha bhāva*). Rādhārāni is calling, "Kṛṣṇa! Kṛṣṇa! Where is My Kṛṣṇa? Oh, please tell me, where is My Kṛṣṇa?" In the next two words, Kṛṣṇa calls out, too: "Hare! Hare! Where is My Rādhārāṇī?"

In the first half of the mantra, then, one finds the feelings of union and longing—spiritual emotions that bring intense realization and satisfaction. In the second half of the mantra, the same emotions increase and intensify. Kṛṣṇa is called Rāma because He is the source of all pleasure (*rāma*). He is also called Rādhā-Ramaṇa, or the joy of Rādhā.

"Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma" means that Kṛṣṇa is feeling ecstasy in the company of His darling Rādhārāṇī. The divine lovers, Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, are together again, swimming in the reservoir of pleasure simply by being in each other's company.

But then, "Rāma Rāma." They're separated once again. Rādhā is crying, "Where is that ecstasy I had with Kṛṣṇa? Where is He?" She calls out His name twice: "Rāma! Rāma!" And He is also crying: "Hare! Hare! Where is the ecstasy I felt with Rādhārāṇī? Where is My beloved?" So in both halves of the mantra there is union and separation. And as one advances spiritually, by engaging in *kīrtana,* one can appreciate these emotions more and more.

Satyarāja Dāsa, a disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda, is a BTG associate editor. He has written over twenty books on Kṛṣṇa consciousness and lives near New York City.

ŚRĪ KṚṢṆA JANMĀṢṬAMĪ

The Advent Of the Deliverer

Unlike us, Lord Kṛṣṇa arrives in this world by His own sweet will.

by Karuṇā Dhāriṇī Devī Dāsī

Painting by Parīkṣit Dāsa

As INFANTS, WE ENTER this world in a delivery room because we need to be delivered from the confines of our mother's womb. Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, comes here as an infant, too. But He has no need for a delivery. He arrives by His own sweet will, and His purpose is to deliver us. He plays the role of an endearing and dependent newborn, but He is complete with all of the powers of the Godhead.

Lord Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.7),

yadā yadā hi dharmasya
glānir bhavati bhārata
abhyutthānam adharmasya
tadātmānaṁ sṛjāmy aham

"Whenever and wherever there is a decline in religious practice, O descendant of Bharata, and a predominant rise in irreligion—at that time I descend Myself." Śrīla Prabhupāda writes that the word *sṛjāmi* in this verse is significant. He has translated it as "manifest" and explains that it cannot be translated to say that Kṛṣṇa creates His form. Neither is He a soul who acquires a temporary material body as we do. Kṛṣṇa's forms or bodies are not created or acquired. They are forever existent. Whether He appears as four-armed Viṣṇu or as a smiling, effulgent little baby, He has the self-same perfect body throughout all time and circumstances. As He likes, He manifests Himself in His own particular way to deliver the suffering people in the material world.

According to a mystical prophesy, the eighth child born to Kṛṣṇa's parents, Vasudeva and Devakī, would defeat Kaṁsa, the cruel king of Mathura. This eighth child was none other than Lord Kṛṣṇa. When King Kaṁsa heard the prophesy, he became determined to destroy Kṛṣṇa. Kaṁsa locked up Kṛṣṇa's parents in a prison, and there Kṛṣṇa's mother gave birth to seven children, six of whom died by Kaṁsa's cruel hand.

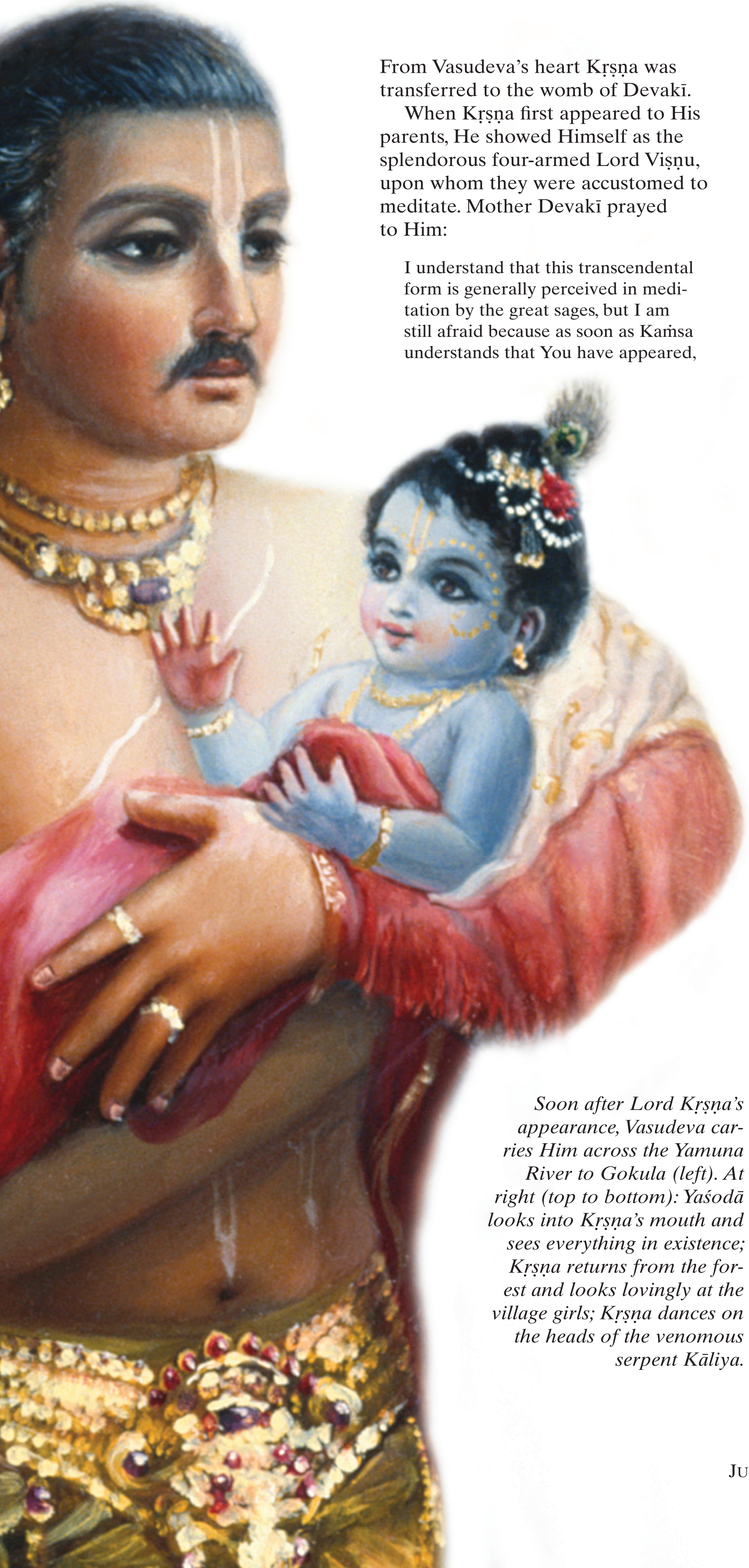
One elder brother of Kṛṣṇa's eluded the sinful king. Known as Balarāma, He is a plenary expansion of the Godhead. He transferred Himself to another location and waited for Kṛṣṇa to also go there. Finally the eighth child of Devakī, Kṛṣṇa, was born in the very dungeon of His family's persecution.

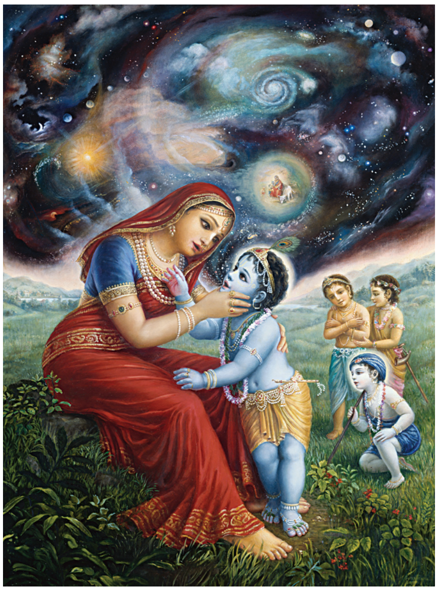
Kṛṣṇa entered this world through the heart of his father, Vasudeva, who had performed strong penances and austerities for thousands of years in his previous lifetimes. Vasudeva did this in order to achieve an intense meditation on the Lord by which He was able to attract Kṛṣṇa to appear as his own son. Devakī, alongside her husband, had also engaged in long severe penances to attract the Lord.

From Vasudeva's heart Kṛṣṇa was transferred to the womb of Devakī.

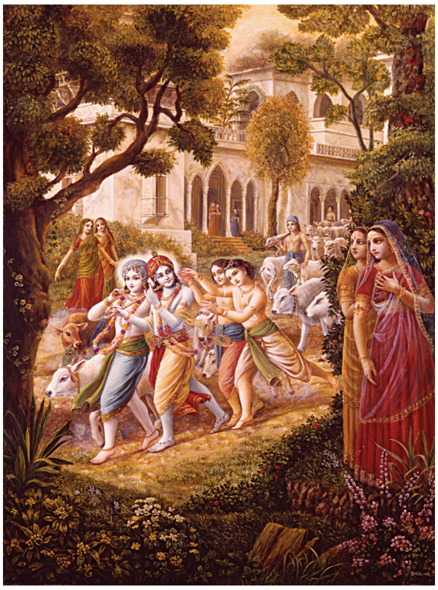
When Kṛṣṇa first appeared to His parents, He showed Himself as the splendorous four-armed Lord Viṣṇu, upon whom they were accustomed to meditate. Mother Devakī prayed to Him:

> I understand that this transcendental form is generally perceived in meditation by the great sages, but I am still afraid because as soon as Kaṁsa understands that You have appeared,





Painting by Yadurāṇī Devī Dāsī



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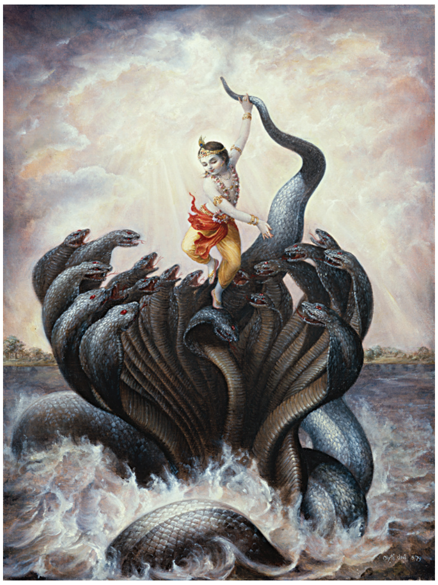


Painting by Dhṛti Devī Dāsī

Soon after Lord Kṛṣṇa's appearance, Vasudeva carries Him across the Yamuna River to Gokula (left). At right (top to bottom): Yaśodā looks into Kṛṣṇa's mouth and sees everything in existence; Kṛṣṇa returns from the forest and looks lovingly at the village girls; Kṛṣṇa dances on the heads of the venomous serpent Kāliya.

> he might harm You. . . . My only cause of fear from my brother Kaṁsa is due to Your appearance. . . . Therefore I request You to conceal this four-armed form of Your Lordship, which holds the four symbols of Viṣṇu—namely the conch shell, the disc, the club, and the lotus flower. My dear Lord, at the end of the annihilation of the cosmic manifestation, You put the whole universe within Your abdomen; still by Your unalloyed mercy You have appeared in my womb. I am surprised that You imitate the activities of ordinary human beings just to please Your devotee.

It is interesting to note Devakī's only cause of fear. It was not for herself, so harassed by her ruthless brother, but for Kṛṣṇa. After many lifetimes of devoted sacrifice to get Kṛṣṇa as her son, her pure motivation is to protect and care for Him.

A Charming Infant Form

The Lord accepted Devakī's request for Him to conceal His four-armed form. He became her baby—a sweet, absolutely charming manifestation of the supreme omnipotent Godhead. Like all of the Lord's wonderful forms, this baby form is the source of unlimited ecstatic bliss and love of God, the impetus for His parents' devotional service.

To hide Kṛṣṇa from Kaṁsa, Vasudeva carried Him across the Yamuna River to the simple cowherd village of Gokula Vṛndāvana and left Him in the care of His surrogate parents, Yaśodā Devī and Nanda Mahārāja. Gokula is the complete spiritual world manifested on earth to serve Kṛṣṇa. It is filled with myriad devotees, including the forests, animals, six verdant seasons, sparkling rivers, and unlimited varieties of sweet fruits and flowers.

Kṛṣṇa thus grew up as a cowherd boy in a farm village. His childhood pastimes in this intimate location were a continuous celebration of sweet bliss for His devotees. The cowherd men and their motherly wives were so glad to be with the Supreme Personality of Godhead that not a day would go by without their enjoying many affectionate embraces, jokes, and games with Kṛṣṇa in their mood of profound parental affection.

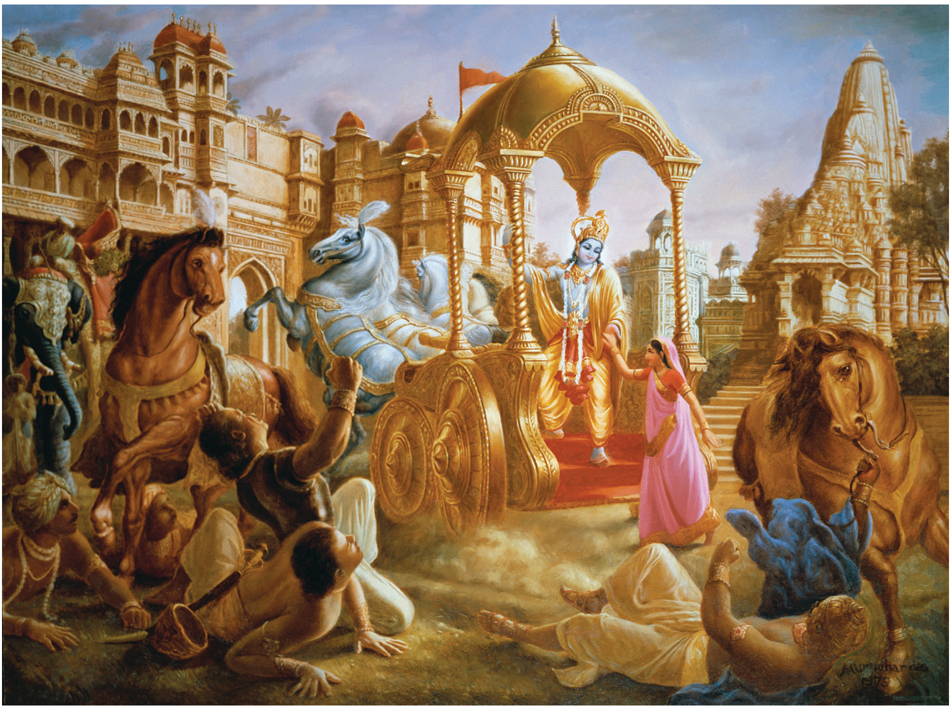
Śrīla Prabhupāda once commented: "This is Vṛndāvana . . . They are uneducated, without any town life. Cowmen. They are Kṛṣṇa's best friends. Unsophisticated, but love intense. That is perfection."

Prabhupāda also said that only with the eyes of love of Godhead can one see the real identity of Vṛndāvana as the place where Lord Kṛṣṇa performs His pastimes with the cowherd boys and girls.

For the cowherd boys and girls who were Kṛṣṇa's peers, Kṛṣṇa was the inspiration in all of their activities. In talking they talked of Him; in singing they sang to please Him. They decorated Him, danced with Him, and joked with Him in the same way that young people love to rejoice in one another's company. All of these exchanges were of the highest and finest spiritual quality, nothing like the relationships of this world, which are generally self-centered and selfish. They wanted only to render service to Kṛṣṇa. He and His devotees in Gokula Vṛndāvana experience the perfect loving sentiments exchanged among servants, parents, siblings, friends, and lovers.

Gokula is the replica on earth of Goloka in the spiritual world. One special feature of Gokula is that Kṛṣṇa repeatedly acted as its chivalrous protector. He defeated one adversary after another sent by Kaṁsa, who continued to plot His death. Kṛṣṇa defeated a variety of amazing, sometimes ghastly enemies, which caused trepidation and wonder for His family and friends.

What happened to Kṛṣṇa's parents in the Mathura prison? At the end of His manifest pastimes in the cowherd village of Gokula Vṛndāvana, Kṛṣṇa returned to the city of His birth to finish His business. He pulled the tyrant Kaṁsa from his throne and easily smashed his head. Then Kṛṣṇa quickly went to find Vasudeva and Devakī, who were reunited with their beloved



Painting by Muralidhara Dāsa

Kṛṣṇa kidnaps Rukmiṇī from her wedding procession.

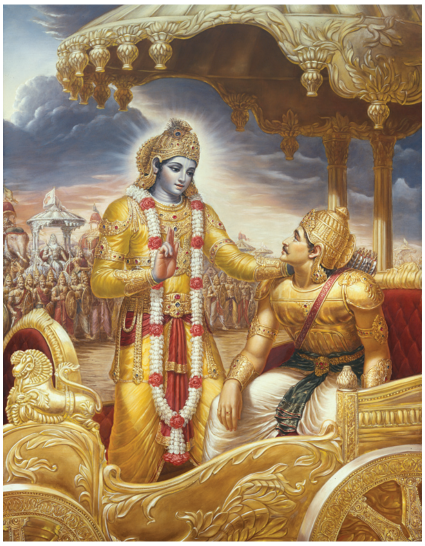
Kṛṣṇa after a long and difficult separation.

Vasudeva and Devakī spent the rest of their years in Kṛṣṇa's pleasurable association. Later Kṛṣṇa left Mathura to rule Dwaraka, an island off the west coast of India. During that part of His life He is called Dvārakādhīśa. In that role He married 16,108 highly qualified princesses and defeated many rulers and their soldiers. He continued in His role as the deliverer, clearly establishing His dominion as the omnipotent, benevolent Godhead.

Kṛṣṇa's Strategy

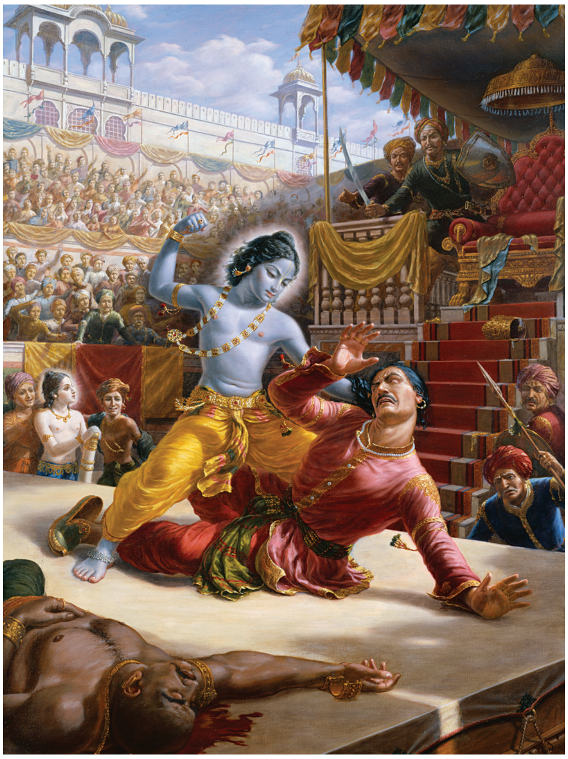
paritrāṇāya sādhūnāṁ
vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām
dharma samsthāpanārthāya
sambhavāmi yuge yuge

"To deliver the pious and to annihilate the miscreants, as well as to reestablish the principles of religion, I Myself appear, millennium after millennium." (*Bhagavad-gītā* 4.8) True to this verse, Lord Kṛṣṇa delivered the *sādhūnām,* the devotees, from the tyranny of dictators such as Kaṁsa and others who persecuted the people. And he enthroned devotee kings who followed dharma.


Painting by Parīkṣit Dāsa

On the battlefield, Kṛṣṇa speaks the Bhagavad-gītā *to Arjuna.*

It may be asked why God would take it upon Himself to enter the material realm just to punish a wrongdoer? He could easily destroy someone through material nature —earthquakes, tornadoes, diseases. Śrīla Prabhupāda comments:


Painting by Parīkṣit Dāsa

Kṛṣṇa kills Kaṁsa, who tried in various way to kill Him.

> As far as the atheistic miscreants are concerned, it is not necessary for the Supreme Lord to appear as He is to destroy them, as He did the demons Rāvaṇa and Kaṁsa. The Lord has many agents who are quite competent to vanquish demons. But the Lord especially descends to appease His unalloyed devotees, who are always harassed by the demoniac. The demon harasses the devotee, even though the latter may happen to be his kin.
>
> —*Bhagavad-gītā* 4.8, Purport

Kṛṣṇa brings His entourage and paraphernalia from the spiritual world to rekindle our feelings for Him and enjoy His uncommon sublime pastimes and loving, personal relationships. In this way He nurtures our very fine, intimate, eternal relationship of service to Him. We are all hankering to recover this, whether we know it or not.

Kṛṣṇa comes here to deliver us back to where we came from. He wants us to go back home with Him, back to Godhead. Śrī Kṛṣṇa Janmāṣṭamī, Lord Kṛṣṇa's birthday, celebrates Kṛṣṇa's intervention in the material world to bring us back to our original home and our original consciousness, Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Sometimes people wrongly conclude that the Lord is not involved with us, that He leaves us here to suffer. They are miserable and full of doubt. But if we take some time to study how Kṛṣṇa, in His eternal body of bliss and knowledge, enters this world to display His eternal pastimes as both a darling child and a chivalrous king, we will see what an elaborate delivery He has arranged for us—and what a sweet reunion celebration He must have planned for us as well.

It is a profound and practical thing to contemplate, as wondrous as the Lord Himself. Kṛṣṇa declares in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (4.9): "One who knows the transcendental nature of My appearance and activities does not, upon leaving this body, take his birth again in this material world, but attains My eternal abode, O Arjuna."

Śrī Kṛṣṇa Janmāṣṭamī is not just another yearly holiday marked by the calendar, not just another occasion for cake and candles. The sublime meaning of Kṛṣṇa's birthday is His arrival for a reunion festival of loving exchanges with His eternal, ecstatic servants. Janmāṣṭamī is the advent of the deliverer. ❀

Karuṇā Dhāriṇī Devī Dāsī, a disciple of His Grace Vīrabāhu Dāsa, serves the deities at New Dwaraka (ISKCON Los Angeles), where she joined ISKCON in 1979. She lives with her husband and daughter.

RENUNCIANT

(*continued from page 47*)

He therefore uses everything he has in the service of his beloved Lord. Śrīla Prabhupāda encouraged us to use all material resources and modern amenities, not for our benefit but to worship Kṛṣṇa and proclaim His glories. Serving Kṛṣṇa with His material energy is real renunciation because by such service we renounce the deep-rooted conception of being enjoyers and proprietors in this world.

If you find a wallet filled with $100 bills, you have three choices. The first is to keep it, the second to renounce it, the third to return it. The first choice symbolizes the person trying to enjoy this world; the second, the philosopher who decides to renounce the world—when it doesn't belong to him in the first place. The third action, which symbolizes using God's property in His service, is the responsible one. The devotee uses his wealth in service to God, while giving up the false sense of ownership and enjoyment.

Thus, Mr. Buffet could take his renunciation a step higher. Whether one is as poor as Śrīdhara, as rich as the emperor Ambarīṣa Mahārāja, or somewhere in between, one can be a great renunciant, simply by possessing Kṛṣṇa.

ISKCON ARAVADE

(*continued from page 26*)

tower to install symbols of Lord Viṣṇu. They emerged on the ledge at the peak, about 135 feet up. I watched Lokanāth Swami up there sprinkling petals on the brass symbols while I sat in the shade, where local children and their parents spoke with me in English. A little girl, at her mother's prompting, recited a *Gītā* verse for me.

Unlike the first two days of ceremonies, attended mostly by ISKCON devotees, the third day of the festival was advertised to the public. Local guests and their visiting relatives ate lunch at the new temple and enjoyed stage programs and fireworks at the end.

It's appropriate that a temple in Aravade is dedicated to a natural, spiritual way of life. During the week after the festival, farmers harvested green grapes and dried them to make raisins, and choice samples of the harvest became offerings of devotion to Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Gopāla.

Tattvavit Dāsa recently edited A Shower of Divine Compassion: The Collected Poems of His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda. *He has also written for BTG about Bulgaria and East Africa.*

Yamarāja Dāsa

Hare Kṛṣṇa
Hare Kṛṣṇa
Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa
Hare Hare
Hare Rāma
Hare Rāma
Rāma Rāma
Hare Hare

PRONUNCIATION: ha-ray, krish-na, ra-ma (rhymes with "drama")

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Chamorshi, Maharashtra — 78, Krishna Nagar, Chamorshi 264 403, Dist. Gadchiroli/ Tel. 09423422914

Chandigarh, Punjab — Hare Krishna Dham, Sector 36-B, 160 036/ Tel. (0172) 2601590 or 2603232/ iskcon.chandigarh@pamho.net

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Coimbatore, TN — Jagannath Mandir, Hare Krishna Land, Aerodrome P.O., Opp. CIT, 641 014/ Tel. (0422) 2626509 or 2626508/ info@iskcon-coimbatore.org

Dwarka, Gujarat — Bharatiya Bhavan, Devi Bhavan Rd., 361 335/ Tel. (02892) 34606/ Fax: (02892) 34319

Gadei Giri, Orissa — Post Alabol Via Balikuda, Dist. Jagatsinghpur, 754 108/ (06724) 238112/ srigopalccd@yahoo.co.in

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Hanumkonda, AP — Neeladri Rd., Kapuwada, 506 011/ Tel. (08712) 77399

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Haridwar, Uttaranchal — Srila Prabhupada Ashram, G. House, Nai Basti, Mahadev Nagar, Bhimgoda, 249 401/ Tel. (01334) 260818

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Imphal, Manipur — Hare Krishna Land, Airport Rd., 795 001/ Tel. (0385) 2455245, 2455247, or 2455693/ manimandir@sancharnet.in

Indore, MP — ISKCON, Nipania, Indore/ Tel. 9300474043/ mahaman.acbsp@pamho.net

Jaipur, Rajasthan — ISKCON, Giridhari Dauji Temple, ISKCON Rd., Opp. Vijay Path, Mansarovar, Jaipur 302 020 (mail: 84/230, Sant Namdev Marg, Opp. K.V. No. 5, Mansarovar, Jaipur 302 020) Tel. (0414) 2782765 or 2781860/ jaipur@pamho.net

Jammu, J&K — Srila Prabhupada Ashram, c/o Shankar Charitable Trust, Shakti Nagar, Near AG Office/ Tel. (0191) 2582306

Jhansi, UP — Inside Saiyar Gate, Near Kali Badi/ Tel. (0510) 2443602

Kanpur, UP — Mainawati Marg, Bithur Rd., Nawabganj, 208 002/ Tel. 09307188117/ iskcon.kanpur@pamho.net

Katra, J&K — Srila Prabhupada Ashram, Sri Kalika Mata Mandir, Katra Vaishnodevi, 182 101/ Tel. (01991) 233047

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Kurukshetra, Haryana — ISKCON, Main Bazaar, 136 118/ Tel. (01744) 234806 or 235529

Lucknow, UP — 1 Ashok Nagar, Guru Govind Singh Marg, 226 018/ Tel. (0522) 2630003, 9415235050 or 9415008065/ sagar10us@yahoo.com

Ludhiana, Punjab — Sterling Tower, Vrindavan Rd., Civil Lines, 141001/ Tel. (0161) 2770600, (0161) 3118897 or 98159-40005/ iskcon.ludhiana@pamho.net

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Rajkot, Gujarat — Sri Sri Radha Neelmadhav Dham, Kalawad Rd., opposite Kankot Patiya, Mota Mava, 360 005/ Tel. 9898550185/ vaishnavseva@yahoo.co.in

Raipur, Chhatisgarh — Hare Krishna Land, Alopi Nagar, Opposite Maharshi Vidyalaya, Tatibandh, Raipur 492 001/ Tel. (0771) 5037555/ iskconraipur@yahoo.com

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Ujjain, MP — Hare Krishna Land, Bharatpuri, 456 010/ Tel. (0734) 2535000 or 34205000/ Fax: (0734) 2536000/ iskcon.ujjain@pamho.net

Vallabh Vidyanagar, Gujarat — Opp. B&B Polytechnic, Mota Bazaar, Dist. Anand, 388 120/ Tel. (026192) 230796 or 233012/ iskcon.vvnagar@pamho.net

Varanasi, UP — ISKCON, B 27/80 Durgakund Rd., Near Durgakund Police Station, Varanasi 221 010/ Tel. (0542) 276422 or 222617

Vellore, TN — Chennai Ext. Centre, 10–12, 10th East Cross Rd., Gandhi Nagar, 632 006

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Warangal, AP — Mulugu Rd., Ayappa Pidipally, 506 007/ Tel. (08712) 426182

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Assam — Karnamadhu, Dist. Karimganj

Chamorshi, Maharashtra — 78 Krishnanagar Dham, Dist. Gadhachiroli, 442 603/ Tel. (0218) 623473

Hyderabad, AP (New Naimisaranya Farm) — P. O. Dabilpur Village, Medchal Tq., R.R. Dist., 501 401/ Tel. (040) 65520070 or 9440057263/ naimisaranya@pamho.net

Indore, MP (Krishna-Balarama Mandir) — Hare Krishna Vihar, Nipania Village/ Tel. (0731) 572794

Mayapur, WB — (contact ISKCON Mayapur)

Puri, Orissa — ISKCON, Bhaktivedanta Ashram, Sipasirubuli, 752 001/ Tel. (06752) 230494

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Vrindavan, UP — Vrinda Kund, Nandagaon, Dist. Mathura, U.P.
Yamunanagar, Haryana — ISKCON-Hare Krishna Dham, Hare Krishna Marg, Raghunathpuri, Yamuna Nagar 135001/ Tel. (01732) 321001 or (mobile) 09355330775/ vishu_bakshi05@yahoo.co.in

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Ipoh — 15-H Jalan Lang, Jalan Padang, Tembak, 30000 Ipoh Perak, Darul Ridzuan/ Tel. +60 (5) 506-1601
Klang — No. 20, Lorong Besi 4, Off Jl. Teluk Pulai, Selangor D.E., 41100/ Tel. +60 (012) 6342464, (012) 3179206 or (603) 33712060/ ramram991@yahoo.com
Kuala Lumpur — Lot 9901, Jalan Awan Jawa, Taman Yarl, 58200 Kuala Lumpur/ Tel. +60 (3) 7980-7355/ Fax: +60 (3) 7987-9901/ president@iskconkl.com
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Seremban—28/7J Taman Desa, Temiang, 70200 Seremban, Negeri Sembilan (mail: 14 RJ 1/1, Taman Rasah Jaya, 70300 Seremban, Negeri Sembilan)/ Tel. +60 (6) 765-1379/ ppnada@tm.net.my
Sungei Petani — Lot 46, Jalan 1/6, Taman Sri Wang, 08000 Sungei Petani/ abbay_143@hotmail.com
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Sylhet, Bangladesh — Sri Sri Radha-Madhava Mandir, Yugal Tila, Kajalshah, 03100/ Tel. (0821) 721358, 03798001275, or 01711478190/ pkdasjps@yahoo.com
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Laguna Beach, California — 285 Legion St., 92651/ Tel. (949) 494-7029/ info@lagunatemple.com
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Port Royal, Pennsylvania (Gita Nagari) — 534 Gita Nagari Rd./ Tel. (717) 527-4101/ kaulinidasi@hotmail.com

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Gurabo, Puerto Rico — Goura's, Carr. 945, Km. 2, H. 8, Bo. Massas 1, Sec. El Silencio, 00778/ Tel. (787) 712-0000
Hato Rey, Puerto Rico — Tamal Krishna's Veggie Garden, 131 Eleanor Roosevelt, 00918/ Tel. (787) 754-6959/ Fax: (787) 756-7769/ tkveggiegarden@aol.com
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Prague, Czech Republic — Govinda’s, Soukenicka 27, 110 00 Prague 1/ Tel. +420 (02) 2481-6631 or 2481-6016/ info@harekrsna.cz
Prague, Czech Republic — Govinda’s, Na hrazi 5, 180 00 Prague 8–Liben/ Tel. +420 (02) 8482-3805/ restaurace@govinda.cz
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Tallinn, Estonia — Damodara, Lauteri St. 1, 10114/ Tel. +372 6442650

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Brisbane — Krishna’s Cafe, 1st Floor, 82 Vulture St., W. End, QLD 4000/ brisbane@pamho.net
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The Culture of Distraction

THE PHRASE "culture of distraction" has been around for a while. I guess I was just too distracted to notice it.

We're constantly bombarded with so much information that focusing on anything is extremely difficult. Economists wonder how that affects productivity in the workplace. Psychologists wonder what it's doing to our minds.

Controlling one's mind is the purpose of yoga, and Kṛṣṇa consciousness is the yoga of *bhakti,* or service to Kṛṣṇa with love. As with any type of yoga, practicing *bhakti-yoga* in an atmosphere where we're deluged with information can be tough. The digital age seems to control us, as yesterday's inventions become today's necessities. When I compare my childhood to that of kids today, I wonder how they can concentrate on anything, their minds so easily disappearing into a virtual world that's becoming more and more like the bricks and bats of the real world.

Śrīla Prabhupāda championed the simple agrarian life as ideal for spiritual pursuits. We find, though, that most people today reject that kind of life. We're just not accustomed to it. (I sometimes joke that even most devotees today would rather live in Dwaraka than Vṛndāvana.) Maybe we're so used to the distractions of modern life that we feel lost without them. But we must beware the risk of getting swept away by the flood of technology. To stay secure, we need time for yoga. We need time to pause and think.

Back to Godhead is meant to help us slow down and gain perspective. Reading BTG, Śrīla Prabhupāda's books, and those of his followers makes us philosophers, people who can watch the flow of the times and not get drowned in it.

Praying to Lord Nṛsiṁha in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (7.9.28), Prahlāda Mahārāja praises his guru for having rescued him from materialistic life: "I was gradually falling into a blind well full of snakes, following the general populace. But Your servant Nārada Muni kindly accepted me as his disciple and instructed me how to achieve this transcendental position [of Kṛṣṇa consciousness]. Therefore, my first duty is to serve him. How could I leave his service?"

Throughout history, "following the general populace" has meant movement away from what's ultimately for people's true benefit. The general populace moves to the direction of Māyā, Lord Kṛṣṇa's energy and the ruler of the material world. Śrīla Prabhupāda writes, "The material world is an illusory energy to deviate the living entities from the path of self-realization."

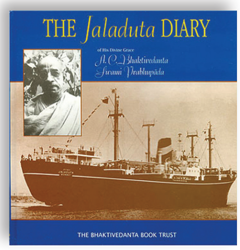
In Kali-yuga, the current age, Māyā seems to be doing her best work, creating distractions at the speed of mind. What's a yogi to do?

Rūpa Gosvāmī, one of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's chief disciples, gave the solution: use the products of Māyā in Kṛṣṇa's service. Instead of rejecting technology outright or letting it divert us from the most human of enterprises—self-realization—we can use it to connect with Kṛṣṇa, thus spiritualizing both the technology and our lives.

Prabhupāda wanted his disciples to use technology to spread Kṛṣṇa consciousness. And he said that, along with chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and reading about Kṛṣṇa, the ideal way to control the mind is to constantly think about how to give Kṛṣṇa consciousness to others. Technology now allows us to do that while savoring the serenity of a simple life and watching the cows graze in the pasture outside our window. Now that's a distraction even I can handle.

—*Nāgarāja Dāsa*

Śrīla Prabhupāda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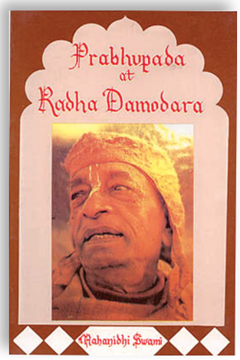
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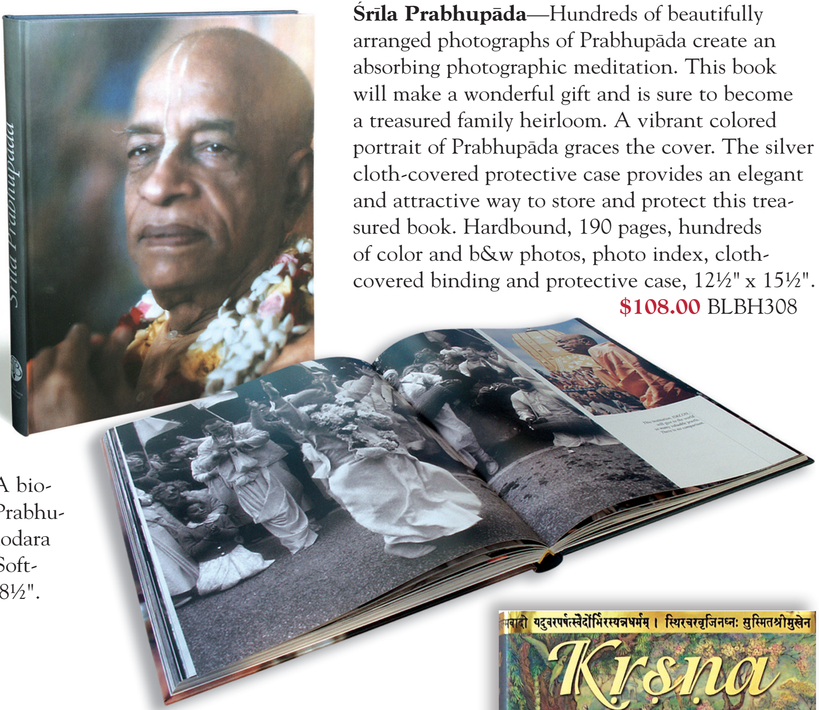
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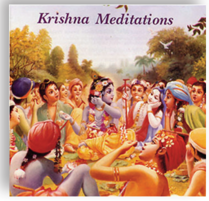
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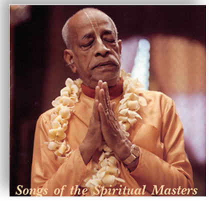
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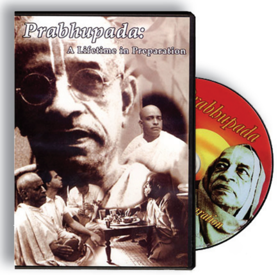
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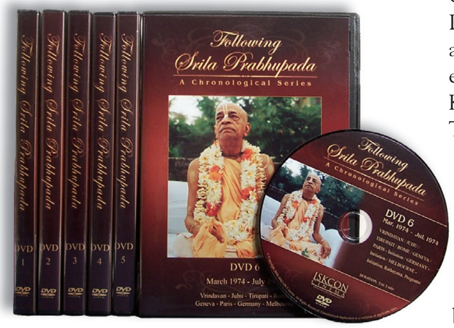
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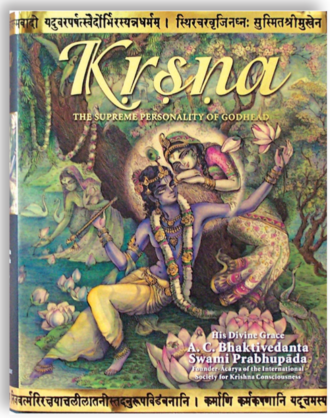
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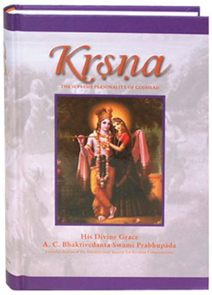

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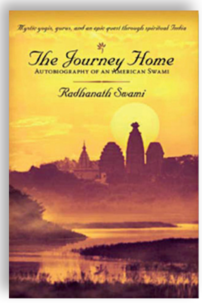

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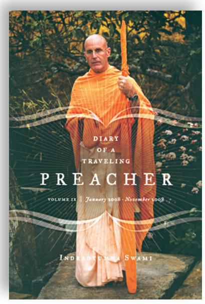

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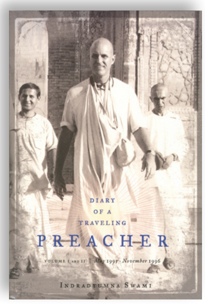

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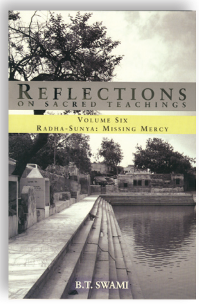

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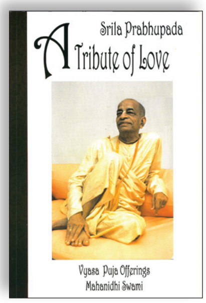

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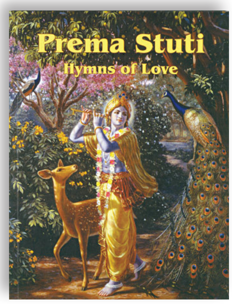

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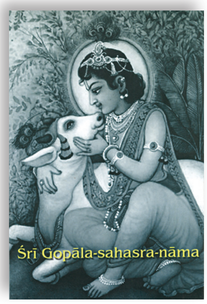

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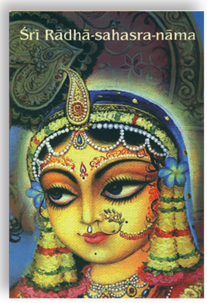

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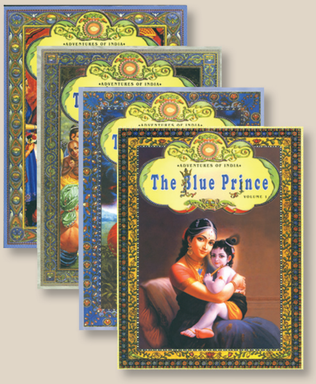

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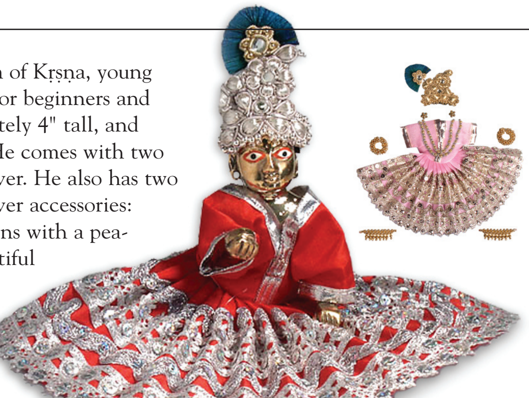

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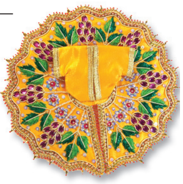

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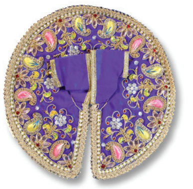

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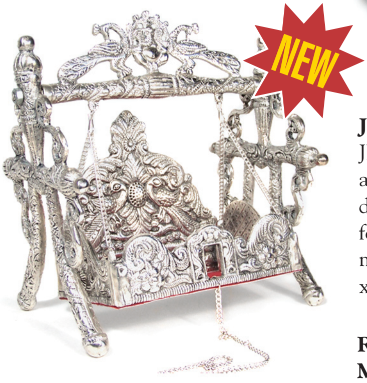

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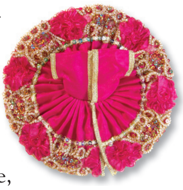

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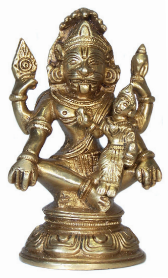

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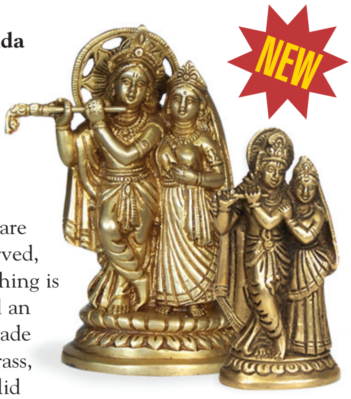

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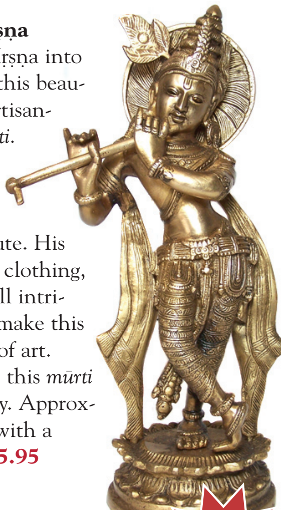

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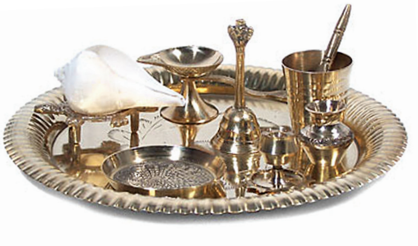

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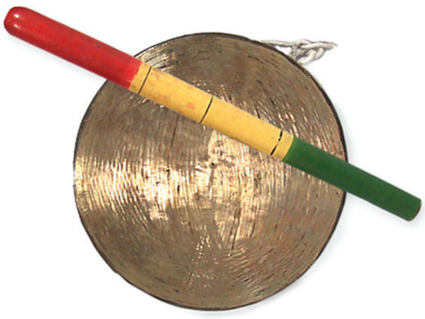

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VEDIC THOUGHTS

The material world is an illusory energy to deviate the living entities from the path of self-realization. Anyone who is in this material world is extremely anxious to get more and more things for sense gratification. Actually, however, the purpose of life is not sense gratification but self-realization.

His Divine Grace
A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 8.19.21, Purport

All seeking after joy is the function of the soul. When the desire for joy wakes up in our minds, we commit a blunder in running after worldly objects and enjoyment. It is only when we receive a spiritual sight of Kṛṣṇa that we understand that His service must of necessity be the sole aim in life.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura
Real and Apparent (Essay), p. 18

Because a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa is desireless, he is peaceful. Fruitive workers desire material enjoyment, *jñānīs* desire liberation, and yogis desire material opulence; therefore they are all lusty and cannot be peaceful.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 19.149

Man attempts to please the Lord for four reasons, according to his condition of life: from fear, for satisfying material aspirations, from a sense of duty, and from genuine attraction (*rāga*). . . . Those who take to worship of the Lord from fear, desire, or duty are not on such a pure level. Those who worship the Lord according to *rāga* are real worshipers.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura
Śrī Caitanya Śikṣāmṛta, 1.10–11

The Lord is the supremely compassionate reservoir of all transcendental qualities. Life after life may I serve Him with love, friendship, and sympathy, and may I cultivate such firm attachment for Him by the precious association of His devotees.

Sudāma Vipra
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.81.36

I offer my respectful obeisances unto Kṛṣṇa, who has a transcendental form of bliss, eternity, and knowledge. I offer my respect to Him, because understanding Him means understanding the *Vedas* and He is therefore the supreme spiritual master.

Gopāla Tāpanī Upaniṣad 1.1

The holy name of the Lord is supremely glorious.

Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 4.19

The Supreme has no material form made of flesh, marrow, and bones. He has His form not by virtue of practicing yoga but because He is the Absolute Lord. The personal form of the infallible, all-powerful Lord is real.

Varāha Purāṇa
(Cited in *Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta* 2.4.160,
Commentary)

FESTIVAL OF INDIA 2009

Schedule for North America

July 4: Washington, D.C., Rathayātrā
July 11–12: Montreal Rathayātrā
July 18–19: Toronto Rathayātrā
July 26: San Francisco Rathayātrā
August 2: Los Angeles Rathayātrā
August 8–9: Vancouver Rathayātrā
August 13–14: Vancouver Śrī Kṛṣṇa Janmāṣṭamī and Vyāsa Pūjā
August 16: Nelson, B.C., Lake Side Park, Festival
August 22–23: Edmonton, Alberta, Rathayātrā
August 29: Calgary, Alberta, Rathayātrā
September 12: Philadelphia Rathayātrā
September 19–20: Boston Rathayātrā and Śrīla Prabhupāda's Arrival in the USA Festival
September 26: Washington, D.C., Śrī Rāma Vijayotsava

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New York Rathayātrā, 2008